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DIARY OF AN IDLE WOMAN IN ITALY
BY
FRANCES ELLIOT.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

"Mrs. Elliot knows Italy and the Italians as few English-women know or have known them. Her book is written as few women could write it."

From THE TIMES.

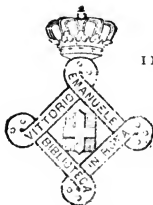
DIARY
OF AN
IDLE WOMAN IN ITALY.

BY
FRANCES ELLIOT,
AUTHOR OF "PICTURES OF OLD ROME."

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IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.



LEIPZIG
BERNHARD TAUCHNITZ

1872.

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TO MY HUSBAND,
THE DEAN OF BRISTOL,

This Book

IS INSCRIBED BY
"THE IDLE WOMAN."

AVANT-PROPOS.

WHEN I call these volumes "The Diary of an Idle Woman," I do so because I went to Italy with a perfectly disengaged mind, with no special objects of inquiry, no definite call or profession, no pre-conceived theories. I was idle in that I went where fancy or accident led me; otherwise I hope my readers will not consider me "an idle woman."

It may be well to mention that some of these chapters (now almost entirely re-written) have appeared from time to time in some of the leading periodicals.

PREFACE.

THE writer avails herself of the occasion given her by a new edition of the *Idle Woman in Italy*, to reply to some criticisms on her work.

Some critics who did her the favour to review her book, expressed strong opinions on her supposed inaccuracy, in having stated that at the gladiatorial games in the circus, *the raising of the thumb was the signal of life*.

Now this is in fact a vexed question, discussed in many learned tomes, and never yet finally settled. The writer having re-examined the classic authorities, considered, and does still consider, her statement to be correct. Those curious in the matter can consult Juvenal and Pliny, and also can enjoy the benefit of the whole discussion by examining the Treatise on Chironomania, by Gilbert Austen.

It is a significant fact, and confirmatory of the author's view, that the tradition, handed down

direct from the Romans, in their gladiatorial games in Spain still existing in the bull-fights (the modern substitute for the exhibitions of the circus), makes the *thumb turned up* the signal of life to the bull; the *thumb turned down*, death.

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DIARY OF
AN IDLE WOMAN IN ITALY.

CHAPTER I.

A Mediæval City—The Sienese—The Piazza—The Palio.

I AM at Siena, on my way to Rome, enjoying those idle days when one learns so much. I arrived by the railway from Florence, which, as if ashamed, folds itself up in a deep valley, and is almost invisible. How it ever got to Siena at all I hardly know. It is the one single mark the present century has been permitted to make there, and that only by way of visiting-card, well outside the gates—otherwise we are entirely in the middle ages; our last news, what dress Bianca Capello wore at the Florence ball, how insolent she was, and how angry the Grand Duchess Johanna looked; or the probable marriage of Marie de Medici with Henri Quatre, if the Pope will allow the divorce from Queen Margot. Indeed, it seems but a few years ago since Charles V.

presented a fine portrait of himself by Holbein, as a legacy to the Sienese citizens. Cæsar Borgia, too, in his slashed velvet suit and fine Mechlin ruffles, how he swaggered about the Piazza, and in and out of the Palazzo Pubblico, ogling every pretty woman he saw—only he saw but few; for the Sienese all shut themselves up while he stayed, being alarmed by the fate of poor Ginevra, who was assassinated because she would not give up her lover, Ettore Fieramosca, to please him. Low enough now he lies, as well as his shameless old father—both gone to give account to the Archangel Gabriel of the poisons they concocted and the Romans they killed!

There stands the stout old city which I know so well, unchanged since I first beheld it more years ago than I choose to own—unchanged since the days of the Triumvirate—crowning a precipitous hill, or rather, many hills; the grand old walls, baked golden yellow by the suns of many centuries, running obstinately up hill and down dale, broken here and there by a cypress wood, or a huge church jutting out on a high promontory, or a castle with quaint towers, mullions, buttresses, and battlements along the sky-line. Always in the middle ages, we ignore the existence of gunpowder as a gross affront to our

understandings, and deem these walls impregnable.

Darkening the walls at intervals by deep shadows, rise lofty machicolated gates flanked by turrets, giant Cerberuses keeping watch, hostile and grim outwardly, but lit up within by richest frescoes of virgins and saints and angels, so that all who leave the city can see them hovering aloft, and say their passing *Ave*, and return thanks for having been preserved from falling headlong down those steep and dreadful *sdrucchioli* (slides), which descend from the main streets into the bowels of the city with a precipitousness perfectly astounding to the constructive sense.

You may enter Siena if you please by the Camollia Gate, where quite the other day the sons of Remus came riding up in an easy way from Rome, on finding that their uncle Romulus, though, ostensibly remarkably civil, was planning for them an immediate descent into the Tartarean fields to join their father.

The very conversation which roused the suspicions of these ingenuous youths is related in an old chronicle, together with all other particulars of their arrival at Siena; also telling how this same gate came to be called Camollia from their tutor Camillus, and how they lived and died here,

setting up the wolf of the Capitol as their badge at the corners of the street, as may be seen still to this day.

Once past the gates, be the time day or night, hottest midday or wildest tramontana wind, the lofty cavernous streets engulf you. Every second building is a grim Gothic palace, with great shelving roof, solid rustic basement, much rich tracing and delicate handling about the arched windows and cornices, and wearing withal a certain *noli me tangere* look that even now keeps the citizen in his place, and teaches him how God, at the beginning, created noble and vile, and divided the ark accordingly.

Nearly all the historic families of Rome, including the fugitive sons of Remus, trace the family cradle to Siena; and as each great family is "*blessed*," as the word is, by one or more popes, who enriched his kindred from the pennies of St. Peter, we have here splendid palaces of the Borghese, Chigi, Farnese, Orsini, and Piccolomini. The churches, with the cathedral (that noble extravagance in marble) at the head of the list, would fill a volume; not forgetting the great fountains sung by Dante, and the pictures representing the most mystic of the mediæval schools. But

enough; we will descend into the Piazza, the throbbing heart of the living city.

Here we are in the midst of the republic of the middle ages. "Here," says Dante, "is the great field where men live gloriously free, Siena's Square," scorning alike Guelph or Ghibelline, Pope or Kaiser; indignantly rejecting the Countess Matilda, her money and her troops; brutal to the Emperor Charles IV., who, coming here as the protector or tyrant of the Medici type, was torn by the outraged citizens bodily out of his palace, dragged into this square, placed in the centre, and (every aperture, door, and street being carefully blockaded by troops) left there alone until hunger and cold brought down his imperial stomach, and he was fain to run from group to group entreating to be let out—entreating, however, in vain, until he promised to leave the city. Sure never was anointed emperor so treated!

Neither did the Sienese long suffer the Spaniards under Charles V. Things were made so uncomfortable to this emperor that he could not stay. Against Cæsar Borgia, too, they set up their backs. But times changed at last, when that traitor Pandolfo Petruccio, born of their own blood, sternly bridled them and broke their spirit, so that when the Marquis Marignano came with his great army,

sent by the Medici Grand Dukes, they were beaten and forced to bend their necks to the Florentine yoke.

This Piazza, shaped like a bow one thousand feet round, is a perfect picture of a republican forum, where forty thousand men can stand at ease, and every man be seen and heard. On the short side of the bow is the public palace, an architectural episode of the thirteenth century, once red, now mellowed to a tawny grey, with stone cornice, quaint turrets, and fantastic gargoyles; while in the midst rises that lovely tower (*della Mangia*), tall and taper, crowned with a circlet of whitest stone. In and out, flocks of grey pigeons circle round and round, finding a home in those rich carvings, or beneath the old clock that looks out like an eye in the centre.

Round the Piazza stretches a fringe of feudal palaces; while overhead, above the roofs, rise the cathedral dome and graceful campanile in stripes of black and white marble, those stripes being the arms of the city along with the wolf and cubs.

In these days now passing, the Piazza has assumed the appearance of a Roman circus, and is lined with raised benches up to the first floors of the palaces, save on one side where the ground descends and mattresses cover the walls. It is the

race of the *Palio*—games held annually, and identified from the earliest times with Siena.

During the Spanish rule they saw fit to alter the old fashion of the chariot-race, and inaugurated bull-fights; then the bull-fights lapsed into buffalo-fights, and finally settled down to what we are now about to see—horse-races.

The city, from the earliest days, has been divided into *contrade*, or parishes. Each *contrada* has its special church, generally of great antiquity, and each *contrada* is named after some animal or natural object, these names being symbolical of certain trades or customs.

There is the wolf, giraffe, owl, snail, tower, wave, goose, tortoise—in all seventeen. Each has its colours, heralds, pages, music, flags, all the mediæval paraphernalia of republican subdivision.

Moreover, each of these *contrade* is capable of committing forgery, murder, parricide, or any other atrocity, for the honour of its name and members. The close streets are really dangerous to traverse at this time. Each party pulls out its dagger, drinks, swaggers, swears, and fights on its own ground, and is ready to murder any one of an opposite faction with all the ferocity of belligerent states. To be the citizens of a common city is *nothing* unless you belong to the same

contrada.• French and English in the good old days were not more savagely opposed. Perhaps no city in Europe has preserved so unchanged these mediæval feuds and customs.

An offence was lately given by "the Wave" to "the Tower." The Tower swore to have their blood, and a band of *giovannotti* came up out of a dark *sdrucchiolo* (slide) descending from the Palazzo Pubblico, in order to hang about in ambush at the mouth of another dark and filthy alley; ready, should a "Wave" surge up on the common shore of the Piazza, to strike it down then and there.

Poor Count Tolomei, the *sindaco* (mayor), a courtly noble, gentle to a fault, presents at these seasons the appearance of an ill-used man, who has neither slept nor eaten from excess of care. He shrugs his shoulders and casts up his eyes in pantomimic horror of the life he leads by reason of the murderous scum, who are so vicious that no police or military cares to follow them into their holes and dens, where they would rather prefer, on the whole, to cut a man's throat.

Each *contrada* runs a horse at the *Palio*, ridden by a *fantino* wearing the colours of the parish; and this horse and this *fantino* are the incarnation of the honour and glory, evil and good pas-

sions, of its *contrada*. The enthusiasm is frantic, and the betting desperate.

This is Wednesday, the 16th August, and we are glad it is come, for there have been rehearsals for four days, twice every day, and the din has been deafening. According to custom, flags have been tossed each day as high as the upper windows, in a kind of quaint dance or triumph, very gracefully executed by the pages of the *contrade*. Then, too, are drums beaten and trumpets sounded within each palace *cortile*, to remind the noble marquis or my lord count—each of whom is “protector” of some *contrade*—that the *Palio* is at hand, and to intimate that a little ready cash will be joyfully received for the purchase of a swift and likely horse (an intimation the noble in question is very careful to comply with, if he desires to live peaceably at Siena).

We are awakened to-day by the great bell of the Mangia tower and a complication of military music, approaching as nearly as possible to the confusion of Babel. Later come huge bouquets, borne by four pages in full mediæval costume of rich satin, wearing plumed hats, and accompanied by drums. These bouquets are sent as acknowledgments to those nobles who have contributed to the *Palio*. The more popular the man, the



larger and choicer the bouquet, which is always accepted with much ceremony.

At six o'clock, when the broiling August sun had somewhat worn itself out, a large company assembled on the great stone balcony of the Chigi Palace, every window on the immense façade being decorated with magnificent red and yellow damask. All round the Piazza these gay trappings marked the lines of the windows, where in each feudal palace stood the living representatives of many historic names.

An enormous crowd, some thirty thousand in number, gradually fills the Piazza, chattering, quarrelling, laughing, screaming. Every seat in the raised amphitheatre is soon taken; and the palace walls are lined as it were with humanity half-way up.

Opposite, there are the noble youths of the Siena College—the Italian Oxford—in full evening dress; and the *séminaristes* (baby-priests), in blue and red *sottane*. In the centre of the Piazza there is a perfect field of Leghorn hats as big as carriage-wheels, and crops of common fans; for fans are carried by every single female down to mites of two years old, who successfully perform all accepted gyrations, and create a flutter as of ebbing waters. Bands of music break in from

time to time with soul-stirring tunes, such as "Garibaldi's Hymn" and "Out of Italy the Stranger." The rumbling of the drums in the different *contrade* sounds in the alleys and side streets, calling together the riders and the procession. The gendarmes are mounted on fat old horses, which, being greatly tormented by the flies, kick and plunge viciously, and send their hoofs into the very faces of the staring populace. Gently and very slowly, with that courtesy natural to Tuscans, these gendarmes "clear the course;" the people gathering, like a flock of sheep, thicker and thicker into the centre. "Clear the course!"—do you understand this, gentle reader? Do you understand that the stones of the Piazza, the granite *lastrì*, are "the course?" Oh, ye grassy slopes of Ascot and of Derby, green with short clovery turf, cool fragrant carpets embroidered with the early daisy and fragrant violet, and many a gay buttercup and flaunting dandelion, figure to yourselves, in your luxuriant spring mantle, the hard smooth stones of this iron pavement! Why, look! there are two corners at the bend of the bow with lamp-posts, sharp as any dagger in the lowest *contrada*. There is another beyond just where they are to start, under the Delci Palace; past this, a slippery level; then another

corner, and a rapid descent. Sure, never was such a murderous course! Sure none but mediæval blockheads, going on the father-to-son principle, would risk their necks on such a suicidal venture—to say nothing of the poor little horses, dragged from the oozy soil of the forest-covered Maremma to break their slight legs on such a *carrousel*!

Great excitement! The gendarmes, whose courtesy has been abused by some ill-educated roughs, sternly insist, with steadily-serried advance of six deep, on clearing the fatal course. Sienese notables at the club, rank and fashion in the palace balconies, are putting up opera-glasses and lorgnettes, and condescending to be amused. The little priests and the noble undergraduates, quite forgetting themselves, are evidently reprimanded sharply. Bells ring incessantly—the great Mangia bell, the audibly beating heart of the city, in long single strokes. The thirty thousand people become impatient; and the hoary palace and the big clock, its nether eye well turned on, keep ward over all. A cannon sounds, and from the Via Casato slowly emerges the procession—the first act in this new-old racing-card. The “Wave” *contrada* comes first—four flag-bearers and four pages in middle-age costume, red and white, the

flag-bearers performing as they advance the *gioco* (game) of the flags; quaint and graceful movements, such as you may see figured in Monstrelet; the *fantino*, or jockey, on an unsaddled horse; the racer, on which he is to ride by-and-by following, led by a page; in all ten different attendants for each *contrada*. The *fantino* always wears a striped surcoat, of the two colours of his *contrada*, with its symbolic image embroidered on his back in gold. Last of all comes the *carrocciolo*, embodying the visible republic, that formerly accompanied the troops to battle, and which, if taken or damaged, caused a terrible reproach and shame, such as the death of a great sovereign would now occasion. It is to our cynical eyes but a lumbering old cart, square and awkward, on which are grouped the flags of all the *contrade* in a fraternal union that never exists elsewhere.

Military bands and soldiers follow, exciting the populace to madness, who frantically clap their hands. All these *dramatis personæ*, including the *carrocciolo*, group themselves on an estrade in front of the public palace, and dispose themselves leisurely for enjoyment.

If darkness can be felt, surely silence may, and we all *felt* the pause when every man and every woman drew their breath. Again the can-

non thunders, and gaily trotting out from under the dark palace gateway, fifteen little horses with fifteen party-coloured riders appear, and place themselves before a rope stretched across the course—a very necessary precaution, I assure you, for last year the horses pressed against and broke the cord with their chests (and a strong cord too), and floored five men and three horses dead in a heap on the stones.

Now they are marshalled at the rope by a middle-aged gentleman in full evening dress—a queer contrast to the mediæval jockeys. He shows extraordinary courage in placing the horses and dragooning the riders. He gives the signal like children—*uno, due, tre, e via!*—drops his official staff, and jumps aside with what speed he can for the dear life. They are off like the wind, round the first corner, on to the murderous lamp-post, down the descent—whish! See, that horse has hugged the corner, rushed down the hill, and is safe. But here, look! this second rider is hurled off against the mattresses lining the house-walls at the fatal corner, or his brains would have been infallibly dashed out on the pavement. He falls, but thanks to this protection, is up again, bewildered, but still holding the reins, and so jumps into the saddle, and rides away. Two others just

escape; and two provoking horses won't run. Many are thrown; one horse bolts up a street. Three times they rush round the Piazza, at a risk and with a speed horrible to behold; and each time the ranks are thinner. They ride well, but against all rule, for they belabour each other's heads as much as their horses' sides—very uneducated and mediæval jockeys! Down hill—up again—helter-skelter—horses without riders racing also for the fun! The drum sounds, and it is all over, and the Oca (the goose) has won; and every one knew the Oca would win, because it was the best horse; and a howl, a shriek of exultation, comes up from the crowd, which separates and opens like the bursting of a dammed-up river.

Then the Oca horse is seized by, at the very least, thirty men and boys, and the *fantino* by as many more, who lift him from his unsaddled horse; and he and the horse are kissed, and hugged, and patted, and rejoiced over, and led, then and there, to the chapel at the bottom of the Mangia tower, where the Madonna stands 'on the altar, in a forest of flowers, uncovered in honour of the day. And so, surging up and down among the crowd, man and horse disappear down an alley, to reappear at the church of their own *contrada*, where the priest receives and blesses

them both, man and beast, and will hang up the *palio* (or banner) in the sacristy, with the date in gold letters, as a *cosa di devozione*.

For many nights, for many weeks, will all the "Goose" tribe eat, drink, and be merry, defying those who betted against them in very awful oaths, down in low narrow slums in the worst part of Siena, among the tanners, under San Dominic's Church, near the Fontebranda sung by Dante. Close by here stands the house of Santa Caterina, whose father was a tanner, and lived beside the fountain to moisten his hides. And Santa Caterina, all angelic as she was, would have rejoiced too at this victory of her *contrada*, for the glory of the *Palio* is dear to the heart of every Sienese.

CHAPTER II.

From Siena to Orvieto—Cathedral—Chiusi—Etruscan Tombs.

WE leave Siena for two days by the incongruous rail, and plunge into the clay hills lying southward—magnified ant-hills massed one upon the other, without shrub or herb to break the monotony of the grey earth, which is here wrinkled and tormented by countless water-courses. Nature in the South seldom exhibits herself in such repulsive forms.

This hilly desert belting Siena forms the border-land between idyllic Tuscany and Central Italy—Tuscany, with its laughing campagnas, rich with fat mulberries and trellised vines heavy with purple clusters, where bright home-like villas and evergreen groves, well-to-do *poderi* (farms), churches, and convents crown each dimpling hill, and dot the sides of distant Apennines in all the confidence of perfect security—Central Italy, with its high, abrupt mountains, stern and repellent, scored with basaltic chasms, and traversed by vast

forests of living oak—sad lonely woods, home of the wild boar or savage swine. Here treeless, dried-up river-beds divide the valleys, and disappear into reedy lakes, without a vestige of human habitation, so marking the presence of malaria. Every town and city stands high up on rock or mountain—natural fortresses, where no straggling dwellings dare to linger outside the lofty walls. A land of grand, yet awful beauty, suggestive of all that is abrupt, sudden, wonderful; here an Etruscan city; there a cathedral glittering like a gem; yonder a lake mirroring itself in the fierce sunshine, deep buried in silent woods.

All this time our train has been moving. Here is Asinalunga, where Garibaldi was arrested after Mentana. At Siena no one dared to touch him—he was worshipped; but in this lonely town, tracked by Government spies, he was taken by order of that king to whom he had given Naples. Nothing succeeds like success. Garibaldi failed, and the greatest of modern heroes is banished.

There is necessarily a certain monotony common to railroads; but after passing Torrita the scenery through the valley of the Chiana becomes too grandly savage to be suppressed.

The towns named as the respective stations

are miles distant, each crowning its own familiar height. Mountain masses on mountain. To the left there is a mountain-chain that on its further side borders the Lake of Thrasymene; yonder lie the mountains of Viterbo; to our right are rugged isolated peaks, each bearing a ruined castle, convent, or village, dignified by historic names and lofty position—all majestic, but repulsive.

There, aloft, is Monte Pulciano, on whose sloping terraces grow those grapes (*manna*, as they are called) producing the "king of all wines." Below lies the fair lake, called the Mirror of Monte Pulciano; its desolate flag-bordered shores the home of countless wild fowl, which, aroused by the railway-whistle, circle terrified over its surface.

Here is the Chiusi station, whither we shall by-and-by return. Opposite is Citta della Pieve, a cheerful little town, raising itself out of the unhealthy vapours on an oak-covered hill, the birth-place of Perugino. And now we stop by a bridge far too large for the shrunken river Arbia, which runs beneath. The doors are opened and the guard shouts "Orvieto!"

A huge station, a precipitous mountain, and an omnibus—such is the terminus of Orvieto.

The line is to be eventually carried on to Rome by Rieti, if Italy escapes bankruptcy.

In many weary zigzags the road ascends a perpendicular rock, and we come to understand why the popes of the middle ages fled to Orvieto when pressed by enemies. That poor beaten Medici, Clement VII., for instance, was glad enough to hide his head behind the strong walls we were approaching, after the sack of Rome by that awful sinner the Constable Bourbon.

On a high plateau surrounded by steep precipices, and protected by walls so solid they might be Etruscan, Pelasgic, and Roman all in one—flanked by a ruined fortress within which a band was playing "*Giulia gentil*" to some *saltimbanques* who had set up their nomad tents there, and were riding bare-backed horses and jumping hoops before a ragged crowd—stands Orvieto. Sad groves of olives wave over its walls, and ruins cumber lonely paths along the margin of its rocks.

A dirtier, uglier, more ill-conditioned place than this once Papal city of refuge it would be hard to find. A squalid, insolent population lounge about the narrow streets; here and there a grim old palace tells a tale of former grandeur,

as does the small piazza bearing a certain architectural prestige of the *cinque-cento*.

The inn "of the fine arts" (of course a broken-down palazzo) presents the worst specimen of *osteria*—vast, gloomy, cavernous; a great well in the middle of the cloistered court, dismal stairs, dirty waiters, rooms without doors, yet smelling as if always shut up, discomfort and squalor everywhere.

But is there not the cathedral, like a jewel in an Ethiop's ear, only one street off, and shall we despond?

On the highest part of the city is a square, from which all other buildings reverently recede. If it be not irreverent to liken a cathedral to a fairy palace, I would dare to do it. Of form so wonderful, of size so vast, of proportions so exquisite, in colour so indescribably brilliant, as the sun plays a thousand antics with its fantastic sculptures and glowing mosaics, until they glitter like a kaleidoscope—who can describe it?

Is it not fitter for Titania, or Undine, or Armida, for Kobold, or genius, or enchanter, than for a shrine? Is it an enchanted palace? or a marvellously-wrought casket for some spiritualised Glumdalclitch? or a casket for Cyclopean gems, worked in marble and alabaster, and adorned

with golden mosaics, a glory of sunshine all around? That wheel window in the centre, above those exquisite sculptures, is surely of finest lace, a thing altogether wrought by fairies, and set there to make earthly artists despair. Books may describe as Italian-Gothic (much more Italian than Gothic) the exquisite façade, broken by three vast portals, delicately wrought in finest alabaster, the spiral columns, the rich profusion of cornice, buttress, points, pinnacles, gargoyles, statues—but I persist in looking upon the whole as a sublime enchantment, a thing made out of the sunbeams, that may disappear in a moment at a wave of the magician's wand.

On entering, one is brought up suddenly in face of a prosaic reality of marble and stone (no delusion here), in alternate stripes of black and white, similar to the cathedrals of Siena, Lucca, and Pisa. The proportions are fine, but there is no mystery of dimly-lighted, "long-drawn aisles" faintly receding in the pale flutterings of chequered shadows. The lancet windows are full of sun, and the bare rafters of the wooden roof are visible in all their unseemly homeliness. The style of art is decidedly realistic. There is a pervading sense of the infernal rather than the celestial regions, which amounts to a positive odour of

brimstone. This decided tendency to the "terrors of the Lord" is strangely discrepant with the joyous spirit of the façade, which is much more pagan than Christian.

At the high-altar are two statues, by Mosca, that defy all the canons of art. Sculpture wrought in a material so grave as marble ought, it is taught, to be calm, if not monumental, and to portray no sudden or accidental attitude. Here we have a semi-heroic virgin, with a girlish face, probably a portrait; her long hair combed back from an open brow, her form shrouded in ample draperies—starting from her chair with a look of terror that is intensely natural. It is not in the least like a Madonna, "blessed among women;" but a girl alarmed, offended, defiant, fearing attack and meditating defence. Before her kneels the Archangel Gabriel, whose wings twist above his head like a serpent.

The Madonna Chapel to the right, covered with frescoes by Luca Signorelli, Fra Angelico, and Benozzo-Gozzoli, is a paradise for artists. From hence Michel Angelo has boldly transferred some of the finest figures bodily to his great fresco in the Sistine Chapel, especially a majestic Christ in judgment, with arms extended to bless

or to curse a prostrate universe. In those days such plagiarisms could be effected.

Old Gozzoli is as careless of form and grotesque in accessories as usual, with that same brilliant and glowing brush (as though the paint were still wet) which we remember at Pisa. Luca Signorelli revels as ever in wildest groups of demons, earthquakes, ruin, fire, fury, and violently foreshortened figures, powerful and astonishing, but so hideous as to shock the artistic sense, like music without melody. There is a haunting sense of study in these forced and tormented attitudes, a consciousness of anatomical torture, without repose or any sense of grace, common both to the copied and the copier. Both Michel Angelo and Signorelli loved elaborate displays of academic skill rather than that crowning triumph of all true art—beauty.

The reality was worse than the appearance as regarded the new school of "fine arts," to which we now directed our attention, for the food at our inn was atrocious, and the prices were high. We were astir by four o'clock A. M., having been made aware of what had often before painfully forced itself on our attention, viz., that an ironmonger and a blacksmith, of extraordinarily industrious habits, invariably reside in close con-

tiguitv to all Italian inns, and that cunningly-devised associations exist throughout Italy expressly for the purpose of "murdering sleep." Much eloquent matter remains still unsaid as to the abnormal idiosyncrasies of small Italian towns, and the intense sufferings endured by the innocent and fatigued traveller, who goes to rest under the pleasing delusion that night is dedicated to silence and repose. At six o'clock we were at Chiusi.

We confided ourselves to the care of a small *vetturino* aged ten, proprietor of a tumble-down, dust-covered cabriolet, so antique that it might have carried Sterne.

The boy was furnished with a large pipe, at which he puffed away furiously. Asked how recently he had paid tribute to such early debaucheries, he laughed scornfully and replied, "he had smoked for many years." He professed to know the tombs and the roads, and cracking his whip over the most sluggish and placable of ill-fed ponies, cocked his hat and rattled out of the station.

On a rounded hill a mile off, in the midst of other softly-dimpling hills waving with olives, lies Chiusi, on what was the site of Clusium, the an-

cient city, the ally of Tarquin in the days when Lucretia spun.

As we ascend, the hills take strange fantastic shapes, suggestive of *tumuli*; we pass sepulchral portals shaded by cypresses and hewn in the tufa—everything is subterraneous and uncanny. After many efforts on the part of our boy, ill seconded by the stagnant disposition of his horse, we reach a small *locanda*, the “Golden Lion,” outside the walls, where children unwashed from their birth, big pigs, dogs, a grinning idiot crawling on all fours, several horribly-afflicted beggars, and a general background of idlers of that gentlemanly class “who have nothing to do,” assemble to meet us. A landlady, fresh from her bed, wearing only a pair of stays and a thin petticoat her hair as Nature pleases, her face smeared by contact with domestic utensils, appears. Evidently a fine lady, however, spite of drawbacks, and so accepted by the group—a lady under eclipse, so to say, but able at any moment to remove the clouds incidental to that early hour, and to blaze forth in full lustre at mass.

We enter, under her guidance, a brick-floored room, dirty past belief. She beckons us on into a *salotto* beyond, which is, if possible, still dirtier, and is furnished with a table, two chairs, and an

elaborate portrait of herself gloriously jewelled (as for mass).

There is a pervading odour of fermenting grapes, rotten flax, and decaying apples—an oppressive compound. We rush to the spotted and dirty windows, and fling them open. The sweet herb-scented air and full blaze of sunshine rush in and take possession.

The *cicerone* insisted on by the boy having now arrived—an aged man, who for forty years has done the honours of Porsenna's capital—we mount our crazy vehicle and jolt along charming lanes, through dewy olive-grounds. Not without protest has the *cicerone* been allowed to sit beside the boy, and when we reach a stony perpendicular water-course his indignation boils over, and he is with difficulty restrained from dragging us also bodily out. Protected by the ancient guide and the unanswerable fact that we have paid to ride, we proceed up the bed of the water-course, and find ourselves in the heart of a great oak forest, the huge silver boles free from all underwood—a Salvator Rosa scene of deep gorges, woody ravines, and rifts of red earth.

Much shaken, we get out, spite of the heat. The boy, from being ejaculatory and abusive, has become sulky under the repeated sneers of the

cicerone, who considers walking compromising to his dignity. "If," says he, turning solemnly to the boy, "I came here with your *babbo* (daddy), guiding strangers along these same roads a hundred thousand times, and you cannot conduct these, it is because you are an imbecile,—a baby. You a *vetturino*! Hi! ho! *per carità*—you! By the body of Bacchus! what an ideal!"

The boy henceforth collapses, maintains a stolid silence, drives like a machine, splashes through deep holes and dangerous ruts, drags his carriage over rocks, scrapes the edge of precipices, and never opens his mouth but to ask a *buona mano* when we part.

A conical hill (*tumulus*) rises out of the wood. Passing under a roof of interlacing boughs and thickly-matted shrubs, we reach a low and almost choked-up aperture; then enter a lofty, sepulchral chamber, twenty feet round. A column supports the centre, and from the side walls open out dark labyrinthine passages, high enough to admit a man on all fours.

This atrium was found adorned with a cornice of solid gold and many beautiful vases. To the right, in a small chamber, one tomb is visible, once containing jewels of such value as to originate the idea that here had lain "Lars Por-

senna of Clusium," the various sepulchral labyrinths seeming to identify it as the mausoleum described by Pliny and Varro. But other tombs have furnished other treasures, and labyrinths are found in nearly all these tombs, and were constructed in order that the spirits of the dead might meet. Corn, wine, and oil were always placed beside the dead, whose spirits were believed to perpetuate the wants and wishes of the body.

Three distinct tiers of sepulchral chambers honeycomb this hill of Poggio Gajella, the upper ones being less ornate and spacious. Around it stood a wall of uncemented blocks of stone enclosing a fosse.

Through a track as uneasy as a nightmare, we struggled downhill some two miles to the outskirts of the forest, beside the small Lake of Chiusi. Lying under a barren hill, near a desolate *podere*, is another sepulchre, called the Deposito del Sovrano, containing eight monuments surmounted by images of the dead. These are of coarse workmanship, but remain *in situ*, resting on rocky benches cut in the sides of the chamber.

Close to Chiusi we visited a third tomb with a painted ceiling of astonishing freshness representing a banquet, at which the guests repose

upon tiger skins. This ceiling is bordered by a cornice of dancing figures.

Whether the Etruscans were of Greek origin, or whether these curious frescoes were executed by Greek artists, remains a mystery; but the men and women here represented are undeniably of the Grecian type. These frescoes will soon be destroyed by the damp that oozes from the hill.

Many painted tombs have been filled in; one by the obstinacy of some nuns, and many others by the peasants, who fear that their beasts may be lost or injured.

CHAPTER III.

The Journey—Monte Oliveto—Razzi.

It blew a hurricane. The wind swept over the Campagna, howling among the lower hills as if portending an earthquake. Above the barren mountain-tops, murky and threatening with the shadow of the coming storm, lay Monte Oliveto Maggiore, twenty-five miles from Siena, the principal Benedictine establishment of Central Italy.

"What weather shall we have?"

The shock-headed, wild-eyed *vetturino* turned upon us fiercely.

"Weather! *Ah, signori, chi lo sa?* It will be what weather God pleases—how can I tell? With two horses we shall pull along; but the roads, *Domini Deo!* they are straight up like a wall—stay and see! We must go round, too; for if I took the nearest road with this wind, why, *cospetto!* we should be blown over, crossing the mountain. *Avanti!*"

Furious whip-cracking ensued, consequent

bounding, struggling, and kicking of the horses, universal jolting, and great terror on our part! A perpendicular ascent lay before us; the horses jibbed, the carriage ran back.

The *vetturino*, from gaily singing opera airs from *Rigoletto*, broke out into horrible oaths. All that fearful man said was not audible while, leaping from the box, he tore asunder some knots in the harness, the carriage meanwhile tottering on the edge of a deep ravine; but he distinctly cursed the father, the mother, and the ancestors of those who had harnessed the horses. We came also now to know that these horses were put together for the first time, so that their conjointure might be regarded in the light of a doubtful equestrian experiment. The shaft-horse, steady by age and education, was our salvation. The aid, attached to the gig by an improvised bar of wood freshly cut from a roadside tree, was a discursive brute, declining as much as possible to join in the work; now peeping over a precipice, or cantering on in front down a perpendicular descent; now turning round and looking at us full in the face, quite indifferent as to consequences. Trouble, it was clear, lay between us and Monte Oliveto.

Meanwhile, we mounted higher and higher

towards the murky sky waiting to engulf us. The noise of the wind was so terrific that, clinging closely together in a common terror, my companion and I could not hear each other speak. Our lips moved, but the sound was hurled away in deafening blasts—away over those desolate fields of mountain-tops into everlasting space. We clung to our seat, we clung to our hats, we clung to each other. The carriage tottered; the *vetturino* urged the little horses to a mad gallop. Mountains, mountains on every side—before, behind; north, south, east, west—black with the shadows of hurrying clouds scudding before the furious blast—an arid desolation perfectly appalling. A few isolated hovels stood up sharp against the gloomy cloud-background on the tops of distant heights. Even these were far below.

“While this wind-*burrasca* lasts,” screamed our *vetturino* in a momentary lull, “you may bless all the saints—you will get no rain; it is locked up in those clouds—*deluges!* Woe to us if it comes down. *Avanti! Lesto!* Quick, my sons” (to the horses). “Hi! hoo! la—la—la-s-s-s!”

The horses shook their ears and galloped wildly under his lashes.

“See the poor things, how gallant they are!

They can hardly stand, the little lambs; yet they would die sooner than stop."

The rough little horses indeed fought bravely, as if conscious that they ought to distance the tempest; but in vain—the wind caught us everywhere.

"Courage, courage! we are near—our miles are almost done! *Ecco*, have I not driven you as if into paradise? These my sons—have they not been lions? Now, anon, we shall be safe in the convent, and the monks will receive you with *tante gentilezze*. You will forget the storm."

Now a precipitous decline, causing our gig to rock ominously, brought us to a defile through bare clay hills so horrible we screamed aloud.

"A thousand devils!—you have no faith. What is the matter? Here we are. Hi! hoo! la-s-s-s!"

The tired horses relaxed into a walk. Some trees appeared—the first we had seen for hours—bordering the road; and the wind, finding other objects whereon to spend its fury, lulled into sullen moans among the branches. We took a long breath. A deep valley parted the hills below; woods, fields, olives, vineyards, dotted the opposite heights. Through a Gothic gateway, formerly the *clausura*, beyond which no woman passed, a

dense cypress wood received us, and a smooth road zigzagged down to the convent, which lies in a snug valley—an enormous pile, church, convent, and farm, with here and there, among the folds of the overhanging cypress woods, a chapel, or shrine, or statue. A low-walled piazza beside the large church of mellow-tinted bricks overhangs a mountain river splashing far below—a solemn, peaceful spot deep in the bosom of the Apennines.

We were at once welcomed by a gentlemanly monk, dressed in spotless white robes, whose duty it is to conduct strangers over the monastery, which was preserved by the present Government, on the suppression of the religious orders, as a national museum, in the same manner as Monte Cassino, San Francesco d'Assisi, San Marco at Florence, and the Certosa at Pavia.

An arched doorway leads into the cloisters, painted by Razzi and Signorelli in frescoes, of such beauty and artistic significance, it is astonishing that they should be almost unknown even to Italians except by report.

Not only are these works overlooked, but Razzi himself is also unknown out of Italy, although he undoubtedly stood next to Raphael and

his master Leonardo in the judgment of contemporaries.

To him was given a certain easy grace and natural inspiration in representing the Madonna and saints; very women, yet bearing the finest expression of devotion, and full of that subtle mysticism which suggests a dual nature, "something of earth, yet much of heaven." Faces more true and real in their humanity than Raphael ever painted. Razzi, the glory of the Sienese school, by his dissipated and errant life often brought himself and his works into disrepute and ridicule. His wild fancy and inveterate love of fun needed to be mastered and subdued by the utmost rigours of that chastened and devotional school before the great genius which was in him could be fully developed.

When summoned, as a young man, by the general of the Benedictines to Monte Oliveto from Siena, where he passed most of his life, Razzi was scandalising the republic, not by his wickedness (for of that there is no trace), but by the lawless folly and ribaldry which led him and a band of wild admirers to ridicule all that was venerated and honoured in the quaint old city. He was a thorough Bohemian; and painted, and

jeered, and got in and out of scrapes, as is the habit of dwellers in that joyous land.

When this strange being arrived at Monte Oliveto, dressed in picturesque rags, and bringing with him a Noah's ark of tame animals—dogs, chickens, squirrels, doves, tortoises, apes, donkeys, and horses, as well as a tame raven which he had taught to imitate his voice and talk—the astonishment of the whole convent may be conceived. The monks, unused to such a burst from the outer world, were delighted. Razzi brought out his lute and sang sonnets to them; he caricatured them, not too decently; and played, he and his animals, such mad pranks that then and there they nicknamed him *Mattaccio* (archfool), a name that ever after stank in the nostrils of his courtly contemporaries.

Razzi was commissioned by the general to continue the life of St. Benedict begun by Signorelli, who threw up his work here in order to paint at Orvieto. The general, displeased by Razzi's conduct, and uneasy at harbouring such a madcap, criticised his works somewhat freely, declaring that they were painted too much *alla mano* (off-hand).

Razzi, much offended, replied, "that his brush

danced to the sound of his coins, and that if more elaborate work was expected he must be better paid."

Better paid he was; but he owed the general a grudge all the same, and took a very characteristic way of revenging himself. One of the frescoes was to represent a particular temptation of St. Benedict, when a band of dancing women are sent to him by a certain priest who hated him, to disturb him at his devotions.

This particular painting Razzi kept carefully covered during its progress, declaring that he meant to astonish the general by its extraordinary beauty.

At length, the whole convent being assembled in eager curiosity, Razzi, surrounded by his pets, tore down the veil, when behold an exquisite painting indeed, filled with lovely forms, but, horror of horrors! they were nude, and the dance was the *cancan* of that day!

The general, indignant beyond words, turned away, sternly commanding the laughing Razzi to destroy such a *scandalum magnatum*. He declared it was his finest work, and wonderfully true to nature; but, seeing the real anger of the general, a compromise was effected, and the too-charming

damsels were clad in some kind of drapery, in which state they may still be seen by the curious. However, the general was so shocked that he did all he could to get rid of Razzi, who was unduly hurried in his work in consequence. This hurry is visible. The frescoes are broad and sketchy in treatment, but none the less masterly; every touch is seen, and what touches they are!

Razzi has portrayed himself (in a scene where St. Benedict takes leave of his family) in a yellow cloak trimmed with black, which he got from a Milanese gentleman turned monk; his raven and a little pig at his feet. In these great works St. Benedict passes from boyhood to age—the same, yet with admirably varied expression of time and feeling; of penitence and sorrow, when praying against temptation; of reproach, when the poisoned cup is presented to him by his monks; of prayer and confidence, when raising the drowned boy; of dignity, when he sits as chief among his monks assembled in conclave.

The convent, through which we were led by our monk, whose heart still clung to the greatness of his order, is immense. The refectory, vaulted and unsupported by pillars, is one of the vastest rooms in Europe; the library, a huge,

mediæval hall, filled with a valuable collection of books, is still the boast and the delight of the five solitary fathers, who are all that remain of this once great brotherhood.

CHAPTER IV.

The Old Cardinal's Retreat.

WE live in it at the time of this present writing. It is in the Montagnola, an hour distant from Siena, among the mountains bordering the Maremma. The whole country is a forest—such a forest! Giant oaks, wild, scathed, savage-looking, growing on rocky broken ground, with never a stick of underwood; spiky cypresses, gathered up like nosegays; patches of olives—grey, mystic trees said to have paled into that sad tint out of grief for the Divine One who once wept under their shade; vineyards of yellow-leafed grapes, now laden with ruby fruit, clinging to light cane supports. Higher up, fold upon fold of rounded hills, dimpling into each other like the petals of a tulip, and clothed with a dark mantle of evergreen ilex. Beyond lies an expanse of open country broken into long horizontal lines of hills and valleys, waving up and down like the swell of a stormy sea, either utterly barren and

desolate, or thickly dotted with villas, churches, towers, and villages, clinging together as if for company. How easy to give the details; how impossible to paint the varied tints and magic changes of light and shade on this broad horizon; the morning mists; the fervid blue of the mid-day sky; the great white clouds like snow-drifts that come riding up over the dark hill-tops; the ruddy glory of the sunsets! When we came here, the woods were green; now they look as if lighted by living flames. The shadows are those of a furnace, glowing russet, deepest ruby, and richest purple.

In the heart of this fair forest-wilderness a villa stands, built in the Tuscan or rustic style, on a plateau facing the Apennines to the south, and backed by the evergreen forests on the hills. It was built by Cardinal Chigi, brother of Pope Alexander VII., and is still in possession of his descendants. As Louis XIV. created Versailles out of a sand-hill, so the cardinal (attracted to this spot by its exceeding natural beauty) caused this villa-palace to arise out of a virgin forest by the force of gold. He summoned the great architect Fontana to his aid; made roads; pruned the wild forest luxuriance into parks and gardens; formed stately terraces adorned with sculpture;

and placed twelve chapels or stations round the house in the adjacent woods, which he peopled with statues of saints, gods, and satyrs, a mixed but goodly company, looking over the tree-tops on pedestals some sixty feet high, and startling the sight in unexpected places. He also caused to be traced from the northern front of the villa a broad grassy alley (spanned midway by a triumphal arch, and further on by a theatre for *al fresco* performances), from whence, rising abruptly—always in a straight line and forming a vista from the villa—two hundred steps of stone, cut through the forest, form a *Scala Santa*, or sacred staircase, mounting to a high tower on the summit of the hill, where twelve monks, living in twelve cells, said prayers for his eminence and all his family, day and night.

When all was done, our cardinal called the place THE THEBAID, in memory of his lowly brethren, the starving monks of the Egyptian desert, who would mightily have enjoyed the change from arid sand, thirst, and hunger, to this refined and luxurious hermitage. Pope Alexander, out of the funds of St. Peter, left it also a noble revenue, along with many broad acres on Tuscan and on Roman soil, which have come down un- lessened to the present day. The Thebaid is

therefore maintained with fitting splendour by the Marquis Chigi, its present owner.

The saloons and galleries within are still decked with old frescoes, gilding, marbles, and statues, to which are added the comforts of our own present time. A crowd of modern retainers, valets, keepers, stewards, gardeners, shepherds, come and go over the grassy court within the gates, where in the morning are often to be seen seated patiently on a certain stone bench, waiting to be served, whole families of beggars—poor yellow-faced wretches, who all receive a dole of bread and wine, according to ancient custom, in spite of the vigorous remonstrances and often violent interposition of Argo, the watch-dog, who is as large and as white as a polar bear.

The old Cardinal's Retreat has its ghost, of course. One evening we had been tempted by the wondrous beauty of the moonlight into the woods. The twisted ilex trunks looked down upon us like a fantastic multitude hovering in the deep shadows; above, the moon rose in an unclouded sky. We went on, and descended from the plateau into the Siena road, over-arched with black branches. On one side, a wall borders this road; on the other, where the ground falls rapidly and the road is terraced, there is not even a

parapet, but a fall of some ten or fourteen feet. The night was very still. Nothing but the distant baying of a dog broke the silence. Suddenly a sound of wheels came on us, beginning very faintly—then ceasing—then coming on again. At last it grew loud and distinct, and proved to be a *baroccino* (gig) returning late from Siena with some of our people—Antonio, butler; Adamo, keeper; and Filippo, gardener.

“Oh, *signori, signori!*” gasped Antonio, “we have just seen the *donnina*; there, just below, between the Satiro” [a great statue] “and this chapel here. We saw her as plainly as we see you, standing in the middle of the road, with her head bent down.”

“Yes,” broke in Adamo, shaking himself as if waking out of a nightmare, “yes, indeed! *Santa Maria!* I was leading the horse—for the road is so rough, and the shadows are so dark—when I saw in the moonlight a woman with something over her head, like the peasant-women wear. She came out of this wall and glided across the road, close before me. She disappeared over the parapet among the woods. *Anima mia!* she was there beside me, for the horse saw her too, and so started and shied that he nearly threw the gig over the parapet.”

"Indeed, *signori*," said Antonio, "the gig jerked, and I was almost thrown out. I saw the *donnina* too."

"Yes, but not so plainly as I did," cried Adamo. "I tell you she passed close—close to my hand, under the horse's nose, with a cloth on her head and a spindle in her hand! She passed across the road over that deep fall, which must have killed any mortal creature."

These two men had been soldiers, were no cowards, and were ready to face any mortal foe bravely. They were comforted with wine and sent to bed. We then sent for the head man—the *fattore*—to ask what it all meant.

It meant that from father to son, so long back that no one can tell where it began, it had been known among the peasants that these woods are haunted by a ghost in the shape of a woman of small stature, known as the *donnina*, who generally appears towards dusk, after the *Ave Maria*, at special spots, and usually in stormy weather. She had been often seen where the servants had seen her, in the wood on the road to Siena; also in a deep hollow or *borro*, the bed of a torrent, dry in summer, and blocked with masses of rock and rolling stones, brought down by the upper streams

—an ugly, lonesome place, with exceedingly steep banks, overgrown with scanty shrubs.

She generally appears, we were told, in black, her head covered, her face bent down over a spindle, which she seems to turn as she moves. Nobody has ever seen her face. There is nothing terrific or horrible about her, save the fact that she is supernatural. She always glides slowly away, so slowly as to be distinctly seen disappearing among rocks, or over walls, in the woods. Not a year passes that she is not seen several times, especially towards early winter.

We spoke with those to whom she has most frequently appeared. An old man, by name Curini, a mason, remembered that once, as he was returning home, he saw a woman whom he supposed, in the fading light, to be his daughter, sitting on the wall of a rough little bridge that crosses the stream in the *borro*, spinning. Her back was turned towards him. "*Ah, Teresa mia*, are you waiting for me?" he said, putting out his hand to touch her shoulder. The hand fell upon air; the figure rose (the back still turned towards him), slowly glided away down the steep bank of the *borro*, and vanished among the big rocks heaped up there. He has often seen the *donnina*

since, but never has been conscious of feeling the horror he felt then.

Then we talked with a keeper called Carlo di Ginestreto, a fine Saxon-looking fellow, with honest round blue eyes and a shock of uncombed yellow hair. This Carlo has his home on the hill over the *borro*, and had seen the *donnina* among the trees there three months ago. "Once," he said, "I was coming from Siena along the road, and there had been a heavy fall of snow, and the moon was extremely clear, and everything in the forest was as plain as day. I was coming along, thinking of a new gun I had seen in Siena, when I saw, standing in the middle of the road, the *donnina* as plain as I see your excellency now before me. She stood there till I was almost close to her. She wore a sort of light petticoat with colours on it, and had something all black, over it, on her head and shoulders. There I saw her, and I saw her shadow in the moonlight, too. She looked like a girl, though I did not see her face, and she went away, *piano, piano, piano*, as I stood still, and faded out among the trees. I never saw her so plainly, for the snow made all so clear. I often see her, *poverina!* I do not feel any fear. What harm could she do to me?" And he spread out his large chest, and lifted his long

arms with that ejaculatory action common to Italians.

After Carlo came Celso, a respectable *contadino* living also on the estate in a vineyard close to the villa. He told us "that after he had come back from serving in the militia, he was standing one evening with his little brother in the road, near the Satiro, when he heard himself called distinctly three times, out of the wood, in a strange sad voice, '*Celso! Celso! Celso!*' His little brother said, 'Who calls you, Celso, in such a strange voice?' and he heard the same voice call him again when he was alone in the wood." He was frightened, and liked it so little that he now never passed by that road in the evening, but went "round a mile or so, higher up on the hills."

We have more material mysterious personages going about the old Cardinal's Retreat, too, as will presently be seen; and we have incentives to strange fancies out of number.

On one side of the villa, adjoining the broad terrace leading to the *Scala Santa*, is a pleasure-ground or park, designed and specially set apart by the cardinal for meditation and repose. It may be some two or three miles round, and is enclosed by a high wall, and entered by three

lofty gates. It is full of broad, moss-grown walks, with here and there statues of monks and angels, high on carved pedestals, in attitudes of prayer. The walks and narrower paths are all knit up at the further end by a chapel somewhat small and low, with kneeling statues on either hand, darkened and moss-grown by time and storm. The trees are the ilex of the surrounding forest, expanded into superb proportions by being so long undisturbed. The ground is rocky and undulating, covered with a graceful undergrowth of arbutus, holly, and laurustinus; every plant and every tree being evergreen. The big branches of the ilex trees, with long silvery beards of delicate white moss hanging down amidst the glittering waxy leaves, pointed like thorns, wave over the paths, and cast flickering shadows as the eager sun darts through the dark foliage. As the passing clouds come and go over the surface of the chapel, here and there a glint of sun calls out the dark outlines of the kneeling statues so vividly that at a distance, looking upon them through a screen of fluttering leaves, they seem to move under the changing light. This is, in truth, a very weird and ghostly spot, set apart, as it should seem, for unholy rites, altogether solemn and mystic!

Here, in the brief though ardent autumnal sunshine, impenetrable shade tempts one to wander among the rocks, and between the dark twisted ilex stems, all speckled and flecked with patches of black and white mosses, like the breast of a bird; or to rest on a carpet of moss, and hear the ripe acorns drop from the evergreen oaks among the dry leaves: or to listen to the busy twitter of the departing birds arranging their winter flight, as they circle round and round, pecking the ripe arbutus berries. Here, too, come the bees of the year, gathering honey from the scented herbs. It is a rare place in which to watch the last pale butterflies hovering among the aromatic flowers of the cyclamen and caper which grow in the crevices of the rocks; and the little green lizards racing over the stones, or lurking immovable in some sunny corner, watching for the harmless wood-snake which still creeps out to enjoy the midday warmth. As day declines in this strange and beautiful wood, the gathering clouds put out one by one the bright lights on rock and leaf and stem; and a gloom gathering around, and a silence of all those inarticulate utterances that people woods with life, tell of darkness and approaching night.

One day, sitting in the thickest tangle, near

where the hill abruptly descends towards the Siena road and the statue of the Satiro, we heard a low whistle—then another whistle answered in an opposite direction—then the sound of many feet crushing the leaves, and of the branches a-flapping as of men passing through them. We promptly made for the house, where the polar bear was aloft on a wall barking furiously, and some serving-men were standing in the court around a group of five rough fellows, each carrying a long gun. One of these, a fair-complexioned youth, rather humpbacked, of about twenty, was armed also with a short sword. This fellow, the spokesman, had walked in, followed by his band, and desired to see the master; for he wanted money. When told that the master was out, he asked for the *fattore*, and still for money. The *fattore* also being invisible, he demanded wine and bread. Gathering up the fragments given him, he and his band all took their departure up the *Scala Santa*.

This intrusion was followed by all sorts of reports. There was a band of six men on the hills over the villa, above the hermitage, their chief, a young man called Campanello, humpbacked, and about twenty-three years old, a deserter. They had guns and revolvers. They had gone to the

residence of an old priest, and when he sent out word to them that he could give them no money, had fired on the house. A peasant, passing at the break of day to his work in the hills, had found a large fire burning, and, sitting down to warm himself, received a blow on his head from a stone hurled at him out of the trees. Other stories came in, telling how the same band had appeared near Siena, twenty-five in number, disguised in black and red masks; had waylaid and robbed people returning from the city market; had bound them to trees, and so left them. Another story told how a certain Bindi had found his villa entirely surrounded one evening, and how he had ransomed himself for five hundred francs. Later came the gendarmes in good earnest, who were refreshed with wine and meat, and then dispersed themselves in the woods to hunt for Campanello.

One evening, just at dinner-time, a peasant appeared, looking very scared, in the court before the villa, holding in his hand a piece of raw meat. So many peasants came and went with such strange burdens of comestibles for the *chef*, that this excited no surprise, until the man with the raw meat made his way to an open gallery enclosed by a

lofty iron *grille*, by which the great hall is entered. Here he stopped, and accosting one of the servants, said he had a message to the Marquis Chigi, which he must deliver personally. We were all in the hall waiting for the dinner-bell, and came out. There stood the trembling peasant, holding his raw meat, which with a low obeisance he presented to the marquis. In a slit in the meat was a dirty little letter to the effect "that Campanello demanded five hundred francs to be placed that night, after the moon had set, under the stone beneath the crucifix in the grove of cypresses in the middle of the forest; and that if the *padrone* did not comply with Campanello's demand, he and his might confess to the family priest, and consider themselves dead." The peasant, being asked why he had made himself the bearer of such a threat, replied, "That Campanello and his band had surrounded his cottage, and that he had shut himself up for some time; but, being obliged to feed the beasts, had at last gone out. That he still found the brigands there, revolver in hand, and gun on shoulder; and Campanello was armed with a short sword. That Campanello had threatened to shoot him, and to hamstring his oxen, if he did not carry the letter." But it was shrewdly suspected that he had more

dealings with the band than he cared to own.

The matter duly considered, it was resolved to give the men twenty francs, which were duly placed under the stone beneath the crucifix in the grove of cypresses, in the middle of the forest, at ten o'clock that same night. Some of our party proposed the three gendarmes and 'an ambush; but as Campanello's men were desperadoes, and as an honest man may be picked off from behind a tree as well as another, and as we were hemmed in on all sides by trees, it was deemed prudent to do without the gendarmes and the ambush.

Now, it is to be remembered that these men—still roving up and down our hills under cover of the evergreen woods now before my eyes as I write—are fed, and clothed, and do not generally sleep out of a bed. Therefore it is pretty clear that if the peasants living here and there, on redeemed fields of corn and olive, on the sunny sides of the slopes, spoke out, the brigands would be soon caught. But your Tuscan peasant is the veriest coward living. He trembles before any Campanello whom he meets; he lodges him, and

feeds him, and conceals him, and would swear his face black and blue before he would betray him. It is fair to the poor fellow to bear in mind that, if he did otherwise, some members of the band, or some other members of some other bands acting on oral instruction, would then and there mark him, as a hunter does a stag; would scent him out and shoot him (and perhaps his children) from behind a convenient tree; fire his house, and strew ashes on his hearth-stone. This in spite of the magnificent defence offered by Government, in the shape of three gendarmes, attired in a brilliant uniform of white, yellow, and blue, with cocked hats as big as Dr. Syntax wore when he went out searching for the picturesque—announcing them at least a mile off, in fine contrast to the emerald mantle of the woods—over a district forty miles in extent. Such facts will not be found chronicled in local newspapers; neither will they be admitted in the clubs of Florence nor other large cities, where it is convenient to believe pleasant things only; but they are true none the less, and *we*, who receive polite correspondence in raw meat in the old Cardinal's Retreat, well know them to be true.

Great news has just come in. Campanello was taken last night. He was living at free quar-

ters on an unfortunate peasant on the very summit of the topmost heights, over the Romitorio, looking towards Volterra. But, in this case, love was stronger than fear of vengeance. He had deeply incensed a youth who was in love with one of the peasant's daughters by paying his court to her, and by offering her some trinkets supposed to have been stolen, which she wore. This youth, by name Oreste, went in his fury straight to a town called Rosla, and informed our friends, the three gendarmes who lived there, where Campanello was to be found, and promised to conceal them until he could be taken. In the meantime, poor Campanello, led away by the same fatal passion of love, lent himself blindly to his pursuer's devices. That very evening there was a dance given at a neighbouring cottage. Thither went Campanello in pursuit of his fair one, unarmed, even leaving his little sword in the house where he slept. In the middle of the dance, however, he caught sight of our brilliant friends, conspicuous in their war-paint, as they naturally would be, and, escaping by a back entrance, rushed off in flight. But Fate again met him in the shape of the injured lover, Oreste, who was watching outside. He sprang upon him; tied him up until the gendarmes arrived; secured him; and, already scent-

ing the sweet savour of a Government reward for the capture of a *capo brigante* and a deserter, triumphantly led him off to prison.

CHAPTER V.

Start from Siena; Monte Varchi; Mr. B.—Brigands; Arezzo—
Cortona; Lake of Thrasymentis; Perugia.

A SUDDEN fancy seized me to visit Arezzo and Perugia by *vetturino*, on my way to Rome, and a relative (Mr. B——) offered to accompany me.

Behold us, then, rising with the sun one fine morning early in October, and consigning ourselves to a lumbering vehicle, furnished with unlimited appliances for luggage, and drawn by four invalid horses, jingling with bells and wearing a certain species of fur nightcap, without which it is considered unorthodox to travel. The morning mists hung about the summits of the mountains, partially concealing the domes and campanile of the city, and partially revealing the rich olive gardens, pastures, and luxuriant vineyards along the road. The Chianti Hills and the higher ridge of Apennines were continually in view, each dent and crevice and water-course on their rugged sides marked with deep lines of shadow.

We were to strike the Arezzo road at Monte Varchi, where we had arranged to rest. My companion—a stern, hard man—was somewhat of a character. He was possessed of two ideas, viz., that Italy, including Rome, was on the eve of a republic; and that the Italians were, to a man, about to renounce Catholicism, expel the Pope, and massacre the priests. These and other equally startling facts, learnt from Mazzini, who was his intimate friend during his exile in London, Mr. B—— imparted to me in a solemn voice many times every day. The object of his present visit to Italy was to witness these marvellous events, and, if it were possible, to discover any locality where *the meat* was tolerable. If he did not succeed, he intended to return to London immediately. With Siena he was utterly disgusted; but having heard that the rich Umbrian plains furnished a good market at Perugia, he begged to accompany me thither, on his way to Rome.

It was market day at Monte Varchi, and the miserable wayside *osteria* was in indescribable confusion. House and stables were all in one, only the bipeds had the first story and the quadrupeds the *terreno* (ground-floor). Somehow or other we were continually turning up, however, into the

stable, where upwards of two hundred horses were munching their oats.

"I wish I was a horse," said Mr. B——; "I could travel then. Oats are generally good everywhere; but the vicissitudes of diet to which my system is exposed in this unhappy country, caused by the contrasts and admixture of butchers' meat"

The arrival of a travelling carriage fortunately interrupted Mr. B——; it was only, however, a reprieve.

Out of the carriage tumbled six ladies of various ages, attended by a fat courier in a fine Polish jacket decorated with fur. He gave himself such airs that, in the absence of any other male, I took him for the *papa*, until I saw him run into the kitchen with a struggling fowl in his hand. The ladies could speak neither French nor Italian, and therefore depended entirely on the courier. They kept their eyes bent steadily on the ground, and looked as though they had come to Italy for a penance. There was a common *sala* into which we were all crammed, together with some local potentates—*fattori* (stewards) and *mercanti di Campagna*, rough fellows, smelling of tobacco and garlic—by an unscrupulous *padrona*, who, reasoning upon the principle of equality and

fraternity established below among the horses, treated us accordingly. The English family were so overcome by their feelings that, escorted by the courier in the furred jacket, they retreated into a bedroom.

Mr. B—— grimly smiled. "The day is at hand," said he, waving his hand majestically towards the retreating ladies, "when these fictitious distinctions will cease—in Italy at least, where the republic is about to be proclaimed." As Mr. B——, seated in an old arm-chair, was evidently preparing for an oration, I escaped below among the horses.

Here stood knots of carmen and drivers in blue cotton jackets—rough, brutish fellows, who never speak without tremendous oaths. Here, too, was the kitchen, where the cook was frantically cutting and cooking cutlets, brought in by a ragged, barefooted child, who seemed to live on the run between the butcher's and the kitchen.

At last we were served in a scrambling way at separate tables, and, because our dinner was brought up first, an eternal enmity was awakened in the breasts of the English ladies and their fat courier—an enmity from which we suffered all the way to Perugia.

After two weary hours we started down the

one crowded street of Monte Varchi, where it would have been easy to walk on the people's heads. We crossed a fertile plain bordered by low hills, ploughed to the steepest summit by pretty milk-white oxen with crimson housings. Fine single oak trees were scattered here and there, soon melting into a tangled wood, excellent for concealment; therefore very alarming to me, as suggestive of brigands. I confess I would gladly have proceeded at a much more rapid pace than our wretched team could accomplish. These forests near Arezzo have always been, and are still, a favourite haunt of banditti; and although the organised bands have long been exterminated by the Government, alarming isolated cases of plunder and violence occur every year. We came to a clearing in some oaks, just like a landscape by Salvator Rosa. It was a natural amphitheatre formed in what had once been an old gravel-pit, half a mile, perhaps, in circumference. The sides were high and rugged—wild, goblin trees overhung the edges, and stretched out their scathed branches over banks indented with dark holes and narrow openings, admirably adapted for concealment. A long stone bridge occupied the bottom of this pass, the road ascending on the opposite side. This ill-looking locality

was called Palazzaccio, and was once infested by the notorious brigand Spadolino. This Spadolino was a sort of hero in his way, affecting to rob the rich in order to assist the poor; and so gaining no end of partisans among the peasants, who are always, as I have said, too ready to wink at this kind of thing.

The story goes that there was once a certain miller, called Giacomo, who had long kneaded his loaves in peace, with a large family rising around him, until bad times came. Starvation threatened him, he could not pay his rent, and he was to be turned out of the mill he had long looked on as his home. 'Giacomo, in despair, sought the deep recesses of this very wood, wandering up and down its park-like glades, until at last, throwing himself on his face on the grass, he burst out into cries and groans with true Italian *furore*. Chance had led him into the immediate haunt of Spadolino, who, hearing a noise, appeared suddenly, as a brigand always should.

The miller, having nothing to lose, was bold with the courage of utter poverty. He looked up, weeping and wringing his hands, though Spadolino stood before him armed to the teeth, and carrying his gun in his hand.

"*Che roba e questa?*" quoth Spadolino; "and,

mille diavoli, why are you making such a noise in my wood?"

"*Ahimè!*" cried the miller, "I care neither for you nor for the devil, whom you may be, for aught I know. I am ruined and undone, unless by this time to-morrow, when the *fattore* returns, I can produce ninety *francesconi* to pay my rent. Let the blessed Virgin help me if I have a single *quattrino*! I shall be turned out into the wood, and my poor *bambini* will starve!" And with that he buried his face again in his hands, and roared louder than before.

"Do you know me?" said Spadolino, grasping him by the arm.

"No," replied the miller; "but I guess you are a brigand by your dress. *Cosa mi fa?*"

Spadolino—still holding him by the arm—looked him straight in the face. "*Cospetto!* if you knew me, you would be glad to see me; for I can help you. Yes, *amico mio*, I can help you, if you ask me. I am Spadolino, who never yet refused a poor man in distress. You shall have the money; my hand on it."

"*Jesù Maria!*" cried Giacomo, jumping up and seizing the brigand's iron fist, "is this true? Are you Spadolino? Oh, angel of Providence! oh, saviour of my children! *Grazie, grazie!*" and

down he fell on his knees, and kissed Spadolino's feet.

"Well," said the latter, "I am glad you have left off howling. Give yourself no thought. You have seen me—you have my word. Go home, and drink my health in water, if you have no wine—drink to Spadolino, the friend of the poor, and the terror of the rich. I may not be able to help you again, for the *sbirri* are close upon me; and I have dreamed too often lately of the domes of Florence—a bad sign, for I shall never see them again until my time is come."

That evening a carriage was stopped crossing this very bridge at the bottom of this very pass, and a rich booty secured. Spadolino, as cruel to the rich as he was merciful to the poor, deliberately cut the throats of the men it contained, and left the women in the road mourning over their corpses. Women, he told his band, were no subjects for him, and he would neither injure nor insult them, nor carry them into the wood, as the younger among that amiable brotherhood suggested. As soon as the earliest streaks of morning tinged the neighbouring Apennines, the miller returned to the spot where they had met the previous night, and there he found Spadolino

somewhat pale and anxious, but holding in his hand the promised money tied up in a bag.

"Here," said he, "is the gold. Let one man, at least, bless me, though my hands be bloody."

The miller shuddered, as he saw that so indeed they were; but, without asking inconvenient questions, he clutched the bag, earnestly thanking him as the saviour of his fortunes.

"Ay, you may thank me," said Spadolino gloomily, "for this night's work shall be my last. If I can escape into the Romagna, I will never draw knife again in Tuscany. The spies are too close upon me. Go, *amico mio*, carry this money home; and when the *fallore* comes to turn you out of your mill, throw it into his face, and let him feel 'tis genuine."

The miller faithfully followed his advice, and by mid-day felt doubly gratified by having paid his rent and insulted the *fallore*. But poor Spadolino had run his race. This last robbery and murder had been hurried and ill-combined. When the gendarmes arrived on the spot, they traced the band into the recesses of the forest. Spadolino was taken, and soon afterwards hung at the Porta Santa Croce at Florence, to the infinite sorrow of the grateful miller, who, however, held his tongue

most determinedly as to his own share in this catastrophe.

We are still wandering in the romantic forest which covers the district.

Not a house is visible. To the left lie the deep blue Apennines in heavy lines, like a background by Tintoretto. The shades of evening are gathering around. No wonder that our talk is of brigands as the carriage lazily pursues its way.

Mr. B—— remembered to have seen Gasparone (the great *capo brigante*, who was known and dreaded all over Italy) some years ago at Cività Vecchia, after his surrender. He was allowed to walk up and down upon some particular wall or bastion, from whence he was visible, and people went in flocks to gaze on him. He hated the priests, too, like a true Italian, and with good cause, for the treacherous trick played on him to induce his voluntary surrender—a true specimen of the Punic faith in vogue among these black-robed gentry, and in perfect accordance with the priestly motto, that the end justifies the means. Gasparone, who, perhaps, was the most finished specimen of a brigand that ever lived, had long exercised his trade unmolested, and quietly robbed, plundered, and murdered quite *à fantasia* in the

Campagna, where his name was much more feared than the Pope's. He had somewhere or other a cavern which extended five miles underground like a catacomb; and, when the unhappy soldiers were sent out against him, they were shot down by dozens—out of the trees, as it seemed, for no living mortal could be seen. All hope of capturing him by fair means was abandoned, when the priests at last bethought them of a stratagem, which one of their number undertook to put into execution.

This priest—who, by the way, must have had immense moral courage—was a sickly, thin ascetic, with want stamped on every feature of his starved countenance. He set out from Rome; discovered one of the entrances into the famous, or rather infamous cavern; and, without more ado, walked boldly in. When he made his appearance, the bandits were so utterly taken aback by his temerity that they forgot to shoot him. They then became curious to know what madman could thus have ventured voluntarily into their lair. The entire band—two hundred in number—gathered round him, their murderous faces lit up by the glare of the torches, which burnt continually in this subterranean garrison. There was a sound of blood in the wild yell with which they demanded

what he wanted, at the same time jangling their knives and stilettoes in an ominous chorus. But the priest stood firm.

"I want," said he, "to know if a brigand chief called Gasparone is to be found here?"

There was a devilish chuckle in reply, which expressed Yes! And the fearful crowd pressed still closer round the priest.

"What do you want with Gasparone?" at last said one of the band.

"I come," replied the priest, "with a message to him from the Holy Father." And at his name he uncovered and crossed himself as coolly as if he saw the Pope in a holiday procession at St. Peter's. "But this message," resumed he, "I must deliver to himself alone; therefore I am come to see your chief, whom people call Gasparone."

The bandits were astonished, and almost respected the thin, helpless priest for his courage. The crowd fell back; the stilettoes no longer rattled; and the men formed into small groups, seeming to discuss among themselves whether or not they should lead him to Gasparone. At last one of the number disappeared.

When Gasparone, keeping his savage state in his own peculiar den, heard that a priest wanted

to see him, he burst into a peal of savage laughter that made the long gallery echo again. Then he swore a horrid oath, and bade his followers bring the visitor into his presence. "What, *diavolo*," cried he, "does the madman mean, that he comes here to run his head into the noose? Is he weary of his convent life, and wants me to shorten it? *Cospetto*, I will soon do his business, if that be all! But in with the *canaglia*; let me hear what he brings from our brother the Pope."

The priest appeared, and in a tone of perfect composure repeated his errand.

"I come," said he, "with a message of mercy from the Holy Father; and to tell you that which, did I not come, you could never know in these deep caverns, though it is on all men's tongues."

"But," cried Gasparone, "we come up to the daylight sometimes, though, as the Pope well knows, for bravely have we plucked many a fat *monsignore*. What, then, is this message we do not know?"

"It is an offer of pardon—entire pardon to you and every bandit who surrenders within three days from this time. No conditions are affixed; the Holy Father seeks only the souls of sinners. This decree is hung up on every cross, and in the four ways along the great roads. But how were

you to know this down below? The three days would have expired—mercy would have no longer been offered—therefore I am come to bring you pardon and peace.”

Gasparone frowned, and was silent. For awhile he seemed to weigh what the priest said, and eyed him askance, as if to detect any treachery. But the man of black stood unmoved, his hands folded on his breast.

“What assurance,” at last said Gasparone, “have I for the sincerity of this offer? How am I to know it is not all an infernal trick?”

“It is a Papal ordinance, signed and sealed in due form, as all may see, and as you may assure yourself. During the next three days there is a truce, and even you, Gasparone, and your band, may walk at large. You can judge for yourself if I am not speaking the truth.”

“We will see,” moodily replied the chief. He waved his hand, the priest withdrew, and passed out through the long passages by which he had entered.

Gasparone, relying on the word of the messenger, during the stated truce did personally satisfy himself as to the truth of the statement. The ordinance, drawn up with every formality, and bearing the impress of the Papal arms, was

hung on every column and cross of the great thoroughfares. On the third day, Gasparone and his band of two hundred surrendered formally to the magistrates. It was a great sight to see these ferocious men, redolent of murders, dripping as it were with blood, come with their arms in their hands, and retire shorn of all their strength, like Samson of his locks, and helpless as he.

But oh, incredible extent of priestly treachery! No sooner were the wretched men disarmed than they were seized by the Papal troops, and imprisoned. No excuse was given, no Jesuitry attempted for this vile breach of faith. Gasparone was locked up in the Castel Sant' Angelo, afterwards to be transferred to the prison at Civit  Vecchia, where Mr. B—— had, as I said, seen him. The brigand yet lives, I believe, but has been sent to Corsica, that *alma mater* of all Italian *vauriens*. The priest—the instrument in this vile transaction—was at once shipped off to Florence, out of the way of the revengeful stilettoes of the Romans. Had he remained on their side the Apennines he was a dead man.

But while we are prosing about bandits and murders the forest has ended. We are in the plain, and on a rocky ridge opposite appears

Arezzo (where we are to pass the night) encircled by walls, and backed by the stern Apennines, all bare and treeless, and now darkening into night.

On arriving, we are ushered into the same Italian inn that somehow meets one everywhere, whether in the far recesses of Venetian Lombardy, or in the uttermost parts of the Romagna. It is always an old *palazzo* which has seen better days, and wears a proud, disdainful look, as if resenting the indignity put upon it by transforming it into a *caravansérai*. The lower range of windows is always closely barred like a prison. There is a great open door, and an enormous staircase, broad enough for a parish to mount abreast, generally rather dirty. On arriving at the top, corridors open in all directions, cold and bare, with great windows looking into unknown back premises, where the *vetturino* drivers live and swear, amid a strong odour of horses and garlic. Now the cameriere, *alias* waiter, ushered us into a large room, with two or three small iron bedsteads, no carpet, very little furniture, and an over-allowance of doors, which, being open, present long perspectives of bedrooms precisely similar. These doors he carefully closed and locked, leaving us finally to our fate, with one tallow candle and no snuffers, so that we feel

very miserable. Dinner is promised at once—*subito momento*—and this prospect warms us for half an hour; but the *subito* of an Italian may be put, Anglicè, into the word “*never*.” We wait, and wait. An hour has elapsed, and no dinner is forthcoming. At last Mr. B—— proposes ringing, but alas! there is no bell; so I rush wildly out, and adventuring rashly into the labyrinth of corridors, get lost; but meeting with a servant, expostulate, am shown the dining-room (a very back room indeed), and delicately and politely told that as the *vetturino* pays for everything (“*pensa a lei*” is the phrase—don’t I know it, ill-luck to it!), they cannot put themselves out of the way for a private family, who may be plucked *ad libitum*. All this is expressed quite politely by a gentlemanly young man with a well-kept moustache, who, on your earnest supplication—now grown into a downright complaint—still promises the dinner *subito*. At this point our rage is raised to the highest pitch by a report from my maid, that through an open door she has seen the English family dining most comfortably amid floods of light, and waited on with great state by the courier in the Polish jacket. This is absolutely maddening, and we feel it so; particularly Mr. B——, who, cold and hungry as he is, looks

sterner than ever, walks about the room, and talks to himself. At last, after two hours' expectation, dinner is announced. We make a kind of rush, like hungry wolves; for, after all, the animal passions are the foundation of our nature, and will *out* sometimes! The very back room is now decorated with more tallow candles, and the presence of two most genteel young gentlemen, who take off the tureen cover with a flourish. There is the same discoloured hot water with vermicelli swimming about in it, which we have had ever since we arrived in Italy, and which follows us along with the inn wherever we stop. There, too, is the wine, which, being admirable vinegar, Mr. B—— rejects with a fierce glance at the waiter, and a horrid grimace. After the soup comes a *frittura* of artichokes, lambs' brains, and combs of cocks; then a horrid lump of indigestible, sodden-looking beef without any gravy, and some chickens which certainly had been enjoying life at Arezzo until a very late hour in the afternoon. A diminutive pudding, with some apples and chestnuts, ends the repast, and we are left to our gloomy reflections. Mr. B—— is excessively angry.

"I cannot really," said he, "stand this kind of thing; it is dreadful to be in a country where

there is no meat. I cannot live without good meat, and therefore I cannot remain in Italy."

I suggest the meat at Siena being tolerable.

"I regret to say," he replies solemnly, "that I did not find it so. I am half starved, for since I have been in Italy I cannot eat. If the meat is not good at Rome, I shall not remain there a week, and I much doubt it."

"At such a place as Rome I could, I think, live on leather," said I.

"Pardon me, you would do extremely wrong to think of such a monstrosity. When Italy is revolutionised, and the real productiveness of the soil belongs to the people generally, there will be good meat, and I shall probably return. The revolution must inevitably take place in about—"

Knowing his one idea, and suffering intensely from it, I got up a tremendous fit of coughing and withdrew, leaving Mr. B—— in the midst of a grand oration about Mazzini. Gladly did I retreat to the small iron bedstead, which, having no head-board or bolster, was difficult to lie in, as the pillow would always tumble down backwards. But I got expert at last, and went to sleep, resolving to see a little of Arezzo in the morning.

In the morning I rose before it was light.

All was dim and grey in the Strada Maestra, whose upper portion is so steep that a carriage could by no means be dragged up. The town hangs, as it were, on the side of a mountain. To my right I noticed a fine Gothic church, with rows of delicate open arcades mounting tier above tier on the façade. This was Santa Maria della Pieve, said to have been once a temple of Bacchus. I hurried up the hill, and yonder on the summit rose the Duomo, but alas! like all its fellows in Tuscany, with an unfinished façade. The interior, though not large, is grandly impressive—a small pattern of that glorious pile at Milan. There was just light enough to disclose the great stone pillars of the aisles supporting pointed arches, rising out of deep masses of shadow. In the choir some splendid stained glass, in lancet windows, flung back the sun's first rays, in blue and crimson, on the pavement. I love the solemn grandeur of these Gothic churches, where the pure stone, unadorned by painting or gilding, rises in pillared simplicity to the fretted roof, all pure and virginal as a maiden dedicated to Heaven. This building was to me full of devotion. At one splendid altar, divided from the body of the church by portals of gilt bronze, the lights were still burning, their waning flames

paling in the morning sun. I had no time to study monuments, pictures, or statues, but I took in the gloomy magnificence of the whole, and was satisfied. Beside the church, which stands high above the city, there is a large square, laid out in avenues of trees as a public promenade; it reminded me of the pretty Lizza at Siena, only there are no statues or monuments here. Indeed, the situation of Arezzo is very similar to Siena: there is the same splendid panoramic view from the walls of the surrounding Apennines, and the same fruity valleys at their feet, diversified with villas and villages, gardens and olive woods. Only the situation of Arezzo is incomparably the finest, the mountains being far grander and more rugged than those which encircle Siena.

As I descended from the square I saw the house where Petrarch was born. It is very small, containing only a door and three small windows. But one could not be sentimental, for the place had freshly been painted and whitewashed, and looked provokingly modern. Next door, too, was a barrack, where the soldiers were already practising the drum, so I fairly ran away. The air of Arezzo—supposed to be very favourable to talent since Petrarch, Vasari, and other geniuses were born here—was exceedingly nipping at this early

hour of an October morning. Petrarch declares, modestly, IF he had any talent it was owing to his birth in the neighbourhood, near enough to breathe "*la sottilità dell' aria d' Arezzo*;" and I declare, if the keenness of the atmosphere was meant, I do not wonder that some extraordinary effect was produced.

Near the Duomo, on the slope of the hill, is the *Gran Piazza*, ornamented by a row of houses designed by Vasari. The guide-books praise the architectural beauties of these *Loggie*, as they are called, but I could see little in them to admire. There is a pretty old fountain, round which the old Italian crones were already gossiping and washing vegetables. Before leaving Arezzo, which was one of the twelve Etruscan cities, I must make honourable mention of its wine, a fine, sweet sherry, light in quality, but as agreeable a beverage as a traveller could desire to refresh himself withal.

The road to Cortona from Arezzo, as well as the railroad, skirts the base of the mountain-chain on which both cities stand. To the right is the fertile plain of Chiana, the richest, perhaps, of the many rich agricultural districts of Italy, extending on a dead level for upwards of thirty miles, shut in by pale outlines of distant mountains. The

entire drive to our mid-day resting place at Camuscia was delightful. I must say I wish heartily there was no such place as Camuscia, which, being situated on the low ground, gives the *vetturini* an excuse for not ascending the mountain, where Cortona fronts the luxuriant plain. This, the most ancient of the twelve Etruscan cities, looks in the distance quite Moresque, with its domes, spires, and turrets, all of a fine brown tint, standing out in high relief against the brilliant sky. I looked at the place with a mysterious feeling of reverence when I remembered that tradition assigns it an almost fabulous antiquity, and that those frowning walls are supposed to have been built by the Pelasgi before the siege of Troy!

But alas! common life will assert its power in the most solemn spots. We are hungry and thirsty in the ruins of Pompeii; take lunch, drink champagne, and talk scandal in the catacombs; and dally on the brink of Etna. *Telle est la vie.* While I was contemplating Cortona out of the windows of the inn, my reverie was broken by the approach of Mr. B——, evidently in a high state of excitement.

“Upon my word,” said he, “the conduct of those English people in the *vetturino* in front is

infamous. I never saw more gross rudeness in my life. They always, of course, arrive before us, and then make a rush to secure the best rooms. One would think their lives depended on it. Deuced ill-bred, to be sure. I wish they had not, like us, preferred the road to the rail. Why is it," continued he, in his grave way, "that English people are invariably so rude, exclusive, and selfish, and unlike any other nation? One may meet people of the first quality—French, Germans, Russians, or Italians—and always experience the very refinement of unselfish good breeding; while every wretched clerk with fifty pounds in his pocket for a fortnight's tour, every boorish cotton lord, who never in his life found himself in decent society, thinks himself justified in the most preposterous pretension. I could kick the fellows. I am ashamed of my countrymen abroad. I always say I am an American—they never behave so."

I laughed at his vehemence.

"Here we are to wait for our lunch until these people have done, just as at Arezzo. Why could we not have sat down together, and so availed ourselves *en masse* of the wretched accommodation of this wayside inn? Ah! when the republic is proclaimed in Italy—when she rises in glorious

revolution, and drives out those who now oppress her—royal tyrants, emasculate nobles, abandoned priests—when rivers of blood have been shed, and all men are made equal—then, and then only, will one be able to travel without being made the object of these degrading insults.”*

I endeavoured to calm him, but his mouth was effectually stopped by the entrance of luncheon. With a stern and disdainful air (for he was silent now, having had out his oration), he discussed the tough cutlets before us. When we left Camuscia, I think we were both in a bad humour.

The next stage is Castiglione Fiorentino, a small but ancient town, on a hill commanding a magnificent view over the immense Val de Chiana and the distant mountains beyond Perugia.

We were now approaching the Lake of Thrasymene—the scene of that awful battle which so nearly decided the fate of Rome. Thrasymene!—how the name took me back to childhood and its happy hours—to dull Roman histories, stern governesses, and Magnall’s Questions! In those days of early study (the calmest and happiest of a woman’s life certainly), that famous battle had always particularly interested me. The fatal fool-

* Such language is not exaggerated. These are the sentiments of the Reds all over Europe.

hardiness of Flaminius, in despising the hero to whom he was opposed, angered me; I almost rejoiced in his doom. I never could forgive Hannibal's want of decision in not then and there marching to the walls of Rome, and defeating the arrogant Romans.

As we advanced, the country assumed a more southern aspect; the hedges were formed of large myrtles and pomegranates, and here and there a great cactus forced its deformed branches upward to the sun's warm rays. We mounted a little rise, turned the corner of a hill, and there was the beautiful lake, thirty miles in length, spread out before us. I never beheld a lovelier view. One discusses the comparative beauty of the Swiss lakes, of Como, Maggiore, and Garda, while this enchanting inland sea is comparatively unknown.

As the carriage descended to a level with the water, we entered vast woods of ancient oak trees fringing the shores in groves and *bosquets* of wondrous beauty. Above rose the hills where Hannibal and his host lay encamped, and behind which his reserve was concealed; while the present road, as well as the railroad, follows the margin of the water, along the low ground on which the Romans advanced.

The shores are solitary, but exquisitely soft

and lovely; and as we drove mile after mile along the shore through park-like woods, I thought I had never beheld a fairer scene of Italian landscape. Two rocky islands appear, breaking the uniformity, as we near Passignano and its railway station—a most picturesquely situated town, close to the water.

On we went along the margin of the lake, through beautiful woods of majestic oak and old olive trees. The weather was lovely, warm and genial as an English July day. Not a sound disturbed the harmony of the scene—the perfumed breeze swept by without a rustle—all was peace. By-and-by the road turns off from the shores at Torricella, and ascends a mountain embowered in the same oak woods. It was so steep that oxen were necessary to drag up our heavy carriage, so we all got out to walk. Mr. B——, under the influence of the fine scenery, grew rabid about the present condition of such a noble country, and the absolute necessity for a republic. If he had been requested at that moment to head the advancing column against the walls of Rome, I think he would have accepted with enthusiasm. His tall figure rose to its utmost height, and his stern countenance was lit by a sinister glow. His hard features, quivering under the influence of internal

agitation, gave him the air of an ancient Roman; and he only wanted the toga to transform him into a veritable republican. I spare my readers the oration he made going up that steep hill (how he had breath for it, I don't know); the conclusion of it was, that that very night he should write to Mazzini, from Perugia, and implore him no longer to delay the liberation of prostrate Italy.

From the summit of the mountain there is a magnificent view. In front stands an ancient castellated tower on a hillock of turf; below, two broad valleys open out right and left, each rifted and broken with range upon range of mountains stern and wild, extending south in long hard lines, the invariable character of Roman scenery. Here and there feudal castles frown down from rocky heights, reminding one of the days of *condottieri* and French invasions; while a few villages peep out from among the oak woods which cover all the low ground and the lower spurs of the mountain. Straight ahead appears the road to Perugia, cutting through the valley. The sun was setting in a perfect sea of saffron and gold, shooting forth long streaks of dazzling light athwart the valleys. It was a glorious scene, and reminded me of a certain landscape I remember by Domenichino, who so well understood the rich Italian tints. By-

and-by, darkness gathered rapidly over the west, the moon came out pure and bright, and, beside her, two brilliant stars that sparkled in the dark heavens.

The road now wound round the base of hills for some time, through very "brigand"-looking woods, all the deeper in shade and mystery from the lateness of the hour. I began to finger the extra napoleons in my purse rather nervously, my fears not being diminished by the exhortations of the *vetturino* to keep a sharp look-out behind for fear the boxes should be cut off the carriage. At last Perugia came in sight, grandly throned on the summit of a rock, which rises abruptly from the plain. I forgot my fears in admiration of its size and splendid position, and the stupendous Etruscan walls that gird its sides, on the very edge of the cliffs. Oxen were again necessary to drag us up to the city, which we entered through a massive gateway, formed of blocks of stone, only to be removed by Titans. A kind of boulevard conducts from the gates into the streets, planted with trees. The darkness only allowed one to guess a view beyond. Strange that so elevated a spot should have suffered severely from the plague during the middle ages, which repeatedly visited this city, and reckoned the great painter, Pietro Perugino, among its victims.

We drew up at the hotel (said to be one of the best in Italy), anticipating, with no small satisfaction, the excellent accommodation awaiting us. On the walls of the hall, and along the staircase, are inscribed the names of all the sovereigns, popes, cardinals, princes, and nobles who had slept there.

I was ushered into a most superb bedroom, evidently the state apartment reserved for kings and princes. The walls were lined with crimson damask and gold, the doors were gilt also, and painted in arabesques; and the bed—oh, how shall I describe that bed?—it was big enough for a whole generation. One disappeared among great festoons and folds of deep red velvet upheld by immense gold cornices. A small door opened close by into a dressing-closet, with an iron bedstead, which I desired to have prepared for me. Somehow I felt certain that grand room was haunted by all the potentates recorded on the stairs, and I would not have slept there for all the world.

CHAPTER VI.

Perugia—Churches—Tomb—Santa Maria degli Angeli—St. Francis—
Assisi—Foligno.

PERUGIA is a wonderful old place. Scarcely one street is level, and all the houses look as if not a brick had been touched since the Cæsars. It is the most consistently ancient city I ever saw. The very latest fashions date back three hundred years; and one feels quite relieved while contemplating something light in the Gothic palaces, after seeing the stupendous antiquity of the Etruscan walls, which certainly must have been raised by the Titans themselves long before their disgrace, somewhere in the time of Deucalion or Nox.

I proceeded from the hotel into the grand piazza, where stands the Duomo, a bold pile of Gothic splendour, raised majestically on a flight of marble steps. In the centre of the piazza is a beautiful marble fountain of exquisite workmanship, whence a perfect river gushes forth, splashing into a spacious basin beneath. Opposite is

the Palazzo Comunale—a huge double-fronted Gothic pile, partly standing in the piazza, and partly in the great street that opens from it. Here is an abundance of all the elaborate tracery and luxuriant fancy of that picturesque age. Heavily-groined arched windows, solid, yet graceful, occupy the grand story; while below, a vast portal, profusely ornamented with every detail of mediæval grotesqueness, opens into gloomy halls and staircases. At the far end of the piazza there is a dark archway, and a descending flight of steps going heaven knows where—down to unknown depths in the lower town. What a brave old square it is! Not a stone but is in keeping.

I ascended the steps and entered the Duomo, where the *coup d'œil* is very imposing, the pervading colour being that warm sun-light tint so charming to the eye. The nave, and, in fact, the whole interior, is very graceful. It is one of those buildings one can neither call large nor small, from the admirable proportions of the whole, no inequality betraying the precise scale. Frescoes there are all over the roof, and a few choice pictures; one in particular, a Deposition by Baroccio, in a chapel near the door, painted, it is said, while he was suffering from poison given him, out of envy, at Rome. This picture has the usual visit-

ing-card, common to all good paintings, of having made the journey to Paris.

Here, too, in a chapel, is preserved the veritable wedding-ring of the Virgin, which came, I suppose, flying through the air like her house at Loretto; also various other relics, all more or less fond of locomotion. In the sacristy, or winter choir, is a lovely picture, a *Sposalizio* by Luca Signorelli: in front of the figures is a tumbler of water with some carnations, painted with a delicacy of which only the old masters were capable.

The more I walked about, the more I was charmed with Perugia. Up and down we went, under old archways, and through narrow streets, each more quaint than the other. Whenever there was any opening, such views appeared—mountains tossed as if by an earthquake, deep valleys, great walls built on rocky heights, massive fortifications—all romantic beyond expression. We reached at last a plateau, called the Frontone, planted with trees, on the very edge of a stupendous cliff. The sun was just dissipating the morning mist over one of the grandest views on which the eye ever rested. Mountains, hills, rocks, of every shape and size, were piled one over the other, terrace-like; while to the right lay the blue Lake of Thrasymene, a calm and glassy mirror in the

midst of this chaotic confusion. High mountains shut in the view everywhere. In front, the rays of the sun were condensed into a golden mist, obscuring all nearer objects. To the left lay a vast plain, fat and fertile, a land flowing with milk and honey. Before us uprose the city of Assisi, sparkling in the sunshine, seated on a rocky height, and also backed by lofty Apennines.

Close by stands the curious church of San Pietro, desolate and lonely. Its form is the perfect basilica: the space over the columned nave is covered with frescoes. In the sacristy are some fine pictures—delicate Sassoferratos, elegant Pinturiccios (an artist, by the way, one learns to esteem properly at Perugia), and some Peruginos that might well pass for the works of Raphael, so clear is the colouring and so admirable the drawing. One little picture of Christ and St. John as children, painted by Raphael in his youth, is very interesting. Pale and dirty as it is, the forms are exquisite.

After we left this church we walked up a hill so steep, I decidedly expected never to get my breath again. Then a magnificent view opened out before us—as there does, indeed, from every point along the city walls. At last we came to

the Porta Augusta, one of the grandest monuments in the world. It is of immense size, and formed of uncemented stones actually gigantic; the walls of Fiesole are nothing to it. I cannot describe the solemn majesty of this portal of unknown antiquity, frowning down on the pigmy erections of later ages. There it stands in glorious solidity until the day of judgment. Nothing short of a universal convulsion can shake it. Over the arch are the letters "Augusta Perugia," looking at a distance like some cabalistic charm. On the left are an open gallery and two massive towers. It actually looks quite awful, like something seen in a dream.

Hard by it is the College of the Belle Arti, full of the most curious Etruscan relics, in wonderfully fine preservation. Whole rooms are filled with stone tombs, small, of course, in size, for the Etruscans burned their dead, preserving only their ashes. All bear recumbent figures reposing on the lid. Vases, too, there are by hundreds; and a pillar in the centre of one room is marvellously preserved. In an upper gallery are a few pictures, but of no peculiar interest. Below, a lonely botanical garden, planted with magnolias and laurel, lies—a spot in which to meditate on the strange destiny of a people capable of such wonderful

achievements in the various branches of art, leaving not a vestige of their history to posterity.

But I was obliged to rush away without ceremony; and, taking a brusque leave of the Etruscan monuments, found myself suddenly in the *cinquecento* Sala del Cambio, which is covered with beautiful frescoes by Perugino. Here he depicted prophets, philosophers, and warriors, as well as the Nativity and the Transfiguration, in an odd jumble. I confess I was not much interested in this apartment, reserving all my admiration for the chapel beyond, where there are some exquisite frescoes by Raphael—sibyls and angels indescribably beautiful; beings such as he alone could create, floating amid the most exquisite arabesque ornaments and fanciful devices. The ceiling being low, one can entirely enjoy these charming works. Here also are paintings by Perugino and Spagnoletto; but all sink into insignificance beside the inspired pencil of the great master.

After seeing the paintings at Perugia, one can estimate the influence exercised by the Umbrian schools over Italian art generally. The demand for religious pictures; the fall of the Romanesque school, caused by the wars of the middle ages; the deplorable condition of Rome—the mistress

of all civilisation—then degraded to a provincial city under the Eastern emperors, superinduced the progress of the Byzantine school all over Italy. Success in this branch of art required no creative genius, there being an accepted type for every subject, which it would have been scandalous not to follow. Art became a manufacture, and was cramped and confined into certain patterns, without drawing, form, or nature, until Cimabue, the Sienese Guido, Giotto, and their immediate followers—whom we may call Naturalisti, from their simple imitation of Nature, as distinguished from the Byzantine disregard for aught save servile copying—at last burst the bonds of custom, produced a more healthy tone, and gave an impulse in the right direction. But the naturalistic tendency of this school caused, in progress of time, a move in the other direction; and in opposition to the over-appreciation of Nature, and a tendency to represent the holiest mysteries under aspects too commonplace, arose the pietistic school of Umbria. Like the blessed Fra Angelico da Fiesole, these artists seem to have devoted their talents entirely to God, and to have made painting the subject of their most earnest prayers.

The retired and secluded position of Umbria, the small traffic her cities carried on beyond their

own province, the immediate vicinity of Assisi and her enthusiastic monks, followers of that mystical visionary St. Francis, all tended to strengthen and develop this religious school. None can look at the paintings of Pietro Perugino, Sassoferrato, or Pinturicchio without perceiving their deep enthusiasm. They are, *par excellence*, devotional pictures; the subjects are ideal in expression, and, although bearing the common human stamp, are entirely sanctified. This school reached its climax in Raphael, the pupil of Perugino, who created beings of another and a more celestial mould, around whom seemed to hover the very airs of heaven—beings too pure for either the passions or the temptations of humanity. Still, to a certain degree, this was a false tendency. What Raphael's powerful genius could command at pleasure sank with him, and soon became among his followers but tame and maudlin affectation. All that is not nature must fall; and any school of painting, however admirable, not founded on this great principle, is fated to decay. Its very merit of extreme ideality and spiritualisation contains the germs of its destruction.

Even the most cursory view of the pictures at Perugia must verify these remarks, and show the

peculiar characteristic of that school of which this city formed the centre. It would be easy to spend at least a week in this most interesting place, divided between the Etruscan antiquities, the exquisite scenery, and the paintings. I was extremely grieved to leave Perugia so soon, but there was no help for it. One church I must mention, San Dominico, which contains the grandest painted-glass windows in the choir I ever beheld—the greens, and blues, and purples brilliant beyond expression. This is the only window I ever saw comparable to those three glorious sisters at Milan, where the whole Scriptures are depicted as in a magic mirror.

The *vetturino* was at the door, and so was Mr. B——, who would not look at a single thing, being solely interested in the meat and the internal struggles of Italy. He was in a great hurry to be off, so in five minutes we were rattling through the gloomy old streets, out of the San Giovanni Gate on the road to Rome, down a tremendous descent. Fortunately for me, our driver drew up midway, about half a mile from the city, and insisted on our getting out to see a tomb called the Grotta de Volunni, forming part of the Etruscan necropolis of the city, accidentally discovered by a peasant digging for herbs in 1840.

Let none pass by this tomb. There is nothing at Chiusi or elsewhere to compare with it. We descended a long flight of steps to the entrance, once sealed by a block of stone. On the inner door-post are plainly seen Etruscan letters in red paint, informing us that this was the tomb of Arnth and Larth Velimnas. We entered the tomb. The porous, drab-coloured clay is fresh as if cut but yesterday, and still bears the high polish produced by the friction of the instruments. Everything remains exactly in the same state as when the tomb was opened, excepting some small vases, lamps, and weapons, which are removed to a museum near. There are ten mortuary chambers, the first, and largest—twenty-eight feet long—containing seven urns resting on stone shelves, with recumbent figures on the top. These urns are of marble, most artistically sculptured: one of them bears both a Roman and Etruscan inscription. The ceiling is wonderful, sunk and panelled in squares, which are gathered in the centre around a Gorgon's head, terrifically natural, and sharp and clear in outline as though just finished. There are other sculptures equally startling; one a Medusa's head placed between two swords. There are also earthenware dragons and serpents on the walls, with horrible metal tongues that

seem to hiss at one in the partial gloom. The other chambers are equally well preserved, but neither so elaborate nor so large.

It was a shame to see so wonderful and perfect a monument in a parenthesis, as it were. But so it was: we paused, exclaimed, admired, and fled; Mr. B—— loudly protesting against delay.

After about an hour's drive, a lofty church uprose before us: this was Santa Maria degli Angeli, the cradle of the great mendicant order founded by St. Francis. It is built over the original cell where he first felt those mystical inspirations to which he so strangely abandoned himself. Begging and mendicancy being inculcated as cardinal virtues by him and his followers, one could not be surprised that here both flourish gloriously. The moment our carriage stopped we were beset by about thirty men, women, and children of the most importunate description, who hovered about us like substantial gadflies. Never, even in Italy, did I see such boldness; they followed me into the church; pulled my sleeve, my hand, and all but laid violent hold upon me. As it was impossible to see anything until this crowd was disposed of, we came to a parley, declaring that we would distribute three francs among the

whole, on condition of being afterwards unmolested. This was agreed to *nem. con.*, and Mr. B—— delivered over the money to a woman sitting at a small fruit-stall, who accepted the office. Around her they instantly clustered, and such a quarrelling, screaming, and cursing began, as only Italians are capable of. One cried, another shrieked, then a couple of men began to fight, and others joining, the affair seemed likely to end in a general *mêlée*; but as the fruit-seller stood her ground firmly, they all finally cooled down, and disappeared one by one into their respective lairs. This was the practical abuse of poor St. Francis's mendicant system, he who boasted he had never refused alms to a beggar in his life!

We now turned to contemplate the noble and spacious church of Santa Maria degli Angeli, raised by the faithful over the rustic cell where St. Francis loved to offer up his devotions. Originally it was a solitary cave, where he could retire unseen by every human eye, and abandon himself to those raptures which history scarce knows whether to denominate madness or ecstatic holiness. Here he passed days, nay, even weeks, rapt in the contemplation of heavenly beatitude. On this spot, therefore, uprose the parent church

which now lends so noble a feature to the surrounding plain. It is constructed so as to enclose his original chapel and cell within its walls. The interior is perhaps too bare, from the excessive whiteness and simplicity of the massive pillars; but its size is commanding, and a noble dome rises in the centre. The present building is modern, the original church having been almost entirely destroyed in 1832 by an earthquake; which, however, respected the altar and cell of St. Francis—a circumstance his followers of course attribute to a miracle. That more sacred portion of the church is railed off and locked up. While waiting for the *sacristano*, who was at dinner, I again fell a victim to some straggling beggars in the church; especially to a woman in the pretty Romanesque costume, who pulled my cloak so perseveringly I was forced into attention. She informed me that, at the grand annual festa, ten or twelve thousand persons are frequently present, drawn from all the surrounding country by enthusiasm for the native saint. So immense, indeed, she said, was the crowd, that persons were frequently suffocated on these anniversaries. What the beggars must be on these solemn occasions I leave to the imagination of my readers; I confess myself quite at fault. At last the Franciscan bro-

ther appeared with the keys, and we entered the *penetralia* behind the screen. The deepest devotion was apparent in this man's deportment, as well as in that of others who chanced to pass us. He never mentioned the saint but in a whisper, at the same time raising his cap; and looked evidently with an annoyed and jealous eye at our intruding on the sacred precincts, heretics and unclean schismatics as we were. Near the grand altar is a small recess, where, as I understood, St. Francis died: paintings cover the walls, and a lamp burns there perpetually. The brother seemed to look on the spot with such devotion, I could not trouble him by a too impertinent curiosity.

But the most interesting portion of the building is St. Francis's cell, outside the church, in a small court at the end of a long stone passage, now converted into a chapel. Under the altar there is a deep narrow hole, visible through bars of iron, where the saint performed his flagellations, and lay as a penance for hours and days without eating or speaking. The legend goes that the instrument of flagellation was the stem of a white rose-bush, growing in a little garden hard by (still existing), and that after his blood had tinged the broken branch the tree ever after-

wards blossomed of a deep red. It is also added that a certain royal lady, within the last few years, procured a slip of this rose-tree, which, when transferred from its native soil, returned to the original colour, and became again a white rose.

As we were returning into the church, the entire brotherhood of nearly two hundred monks passed along the stone passage to the refectory, walking two and two, and singing. Their voices sounded hollow and sad as the chant echoed through the vaulted corridors. Their robes of brown serge, and their pale and downcast countenances, gave one a melancholy impression of the order. The younger monks passed first, and the sacristan desired us ladies to conceal our dangerous faces behind the door; but the rear being brought up by aged and infirm brethren, who were considered well seasoned to like temptations, we were permitted to re-enter the passage into the church. These monks, I understand, fast to an extraordinary extent, and further exercise their self-denial by sitting for a long time repeating prayers, with their scanty food spread out before them, waiting until appetite be thoroughly conquered ere they allow themselves any nourishment.

From the church of Santa Maria degli Angeli, I could gaze up at the town of Assisi, grandly spread out on a mountain-chain in front, about a mile distant. This celebrated convent of St. Francis runs out like a cape, as it were, into the plains below, apart from the town, and is supported on arched foundations eighty or a hundred feet high, fixed on the solid rock, visible from a great distance, and looking like piles of clustered pillars surmounted by a majestic palace. The effect is extremely imposing. Behind rises the city, crowned by an ancient ruined castle on a green hill; while beyond, and enclosing the whole, are lofty and finely wooded mountains. Leaving our *vetturino* below, we hired a light *calèche*, and Mr. B—— and I proceeded towards Assisi. Mr. B—— was by no means a congenial companion; for he hates monks, and evinces little sympathy for mediæval art. We were straightway fastened to a couple of milk-white steers, to be dragged up the very steep acclivity on which Assisi stands, and, as the road was rough and stony, all further conversation was impossible.

As we approached, Assisi assumed a more and more singular appearance, commanding a magnificent view over the plain traversed by an-

cient aqueducts. Nothing can be more striking than the aspect of its half-ruined walls, battlements, and towers. The forsaken appearance of the streets makes it look more like a city of the dead than the living. One could easily believe the whole place had gone to sleep after the great churches were built, and never woke up again.

Up and down two or three break-neck streets, and we enter the outer *cortile*, leading to the three separate churches into which the vast pile is divided. This *cortile* is on a level with the middle church. High above rises the upper church; while below the ground on which we stand is the lower one—the burying-place of St. Francis, excavated out of the solid rock on which the artificial supports of the superstructure are built. The *cortile*, surrounded by low arched cloisters, is desolate and grass-grown. We passed through a richly-sculptured pointed arch to the left into other cloisters, which are large and airy, and covered with half-obliterated frescoes. In the centre is a deep well, full of the most lively fish. After some delay, and many desperate efforts on the part of Mr. B—— to penetrate the recesses of various dark and interminable passages into the *Clausura*, or closed part, where I, as a woman,

dared not follow, we at last laid violent hands on a Franciscan, and entreated him to show us the convent buildings.

He ushered us into the middle church, which, on the whole, is the finest and most interesting. There is a solemn, mysterious gloom about it, a "dim, religious light," that responds agreeably to one's preconceived expectations. The roof is arched, and somewhat low; and the one long single nave, with a transept at either extremity, together with the side walls and chapels, are covered with most curious frescoes. Some of the chapels were so dark that it was impossible to distinguish more than the general rich effect, but in others better lighted the paintings are fresh and brilliant, and of extreme beauty. Here are the three celebrated frescoes by Giotto, representing the virtues of Poverty, Obedience, and Chastity. Poverty appears as a woman given in marriage to St. Francis. She is a sweet feminine figure, quite clothed with thorns; in front are boys mocking her, while angels hover around. By her side stands the Saviour, who is joining her hand to that of the saint. Chastity is represented by a woman in a strong fortress, surrounded by angels and hosts of mailed warriors. St. Francis advances towards her, escorted by

churchmen, and is in the act of driving away earthly or impure love. Obedience is more obscure—wrapped too deeply in emblematical allegory for me to interpret. Kugler says that tradition assigns the idea of these frescoes to Dante, who was, as appears from his "*Commedia*," an intimate friend of Giotto's. Every window in this beautiful church is of stained glass, lending a fine glow to its somewhat faded magnificence. The air of age and decay about the altar furniture, though harmonising with the general character of the place, surprised me much, when I considered the veneration in which these churches are universally held.

I bade a reluctant farewell to the beautiful frescoes, which would have afforded good study for many days to a lover of mediæval art; and I descended a double flight of stairs opening from the centre of the floor into the third or subterranean church. This, both in size and circular construction, recalled to me the chapel of San Carlo Borromeo, under the grand altar of the Duomo at Milan, only that the tomb of St. Francis is excavated out of the living rock. The monk and his acolyte lighted our darkness with huge torches. When visible, the third church, or rather chapel (for its size scarcely allows of calling it

anything else), is very magnificent, surrounded by a double row of yellow porphyry columns, one range encircling the rugged rock, the other surrounding the outer wall. The burial-place of the saint, under the altar, was approached by the monk with the utmost veneration; and had it not been for the withering presence of Mr. B—— (stern representative of the prejudices of the outer world) I think even I should have bent the knee before a shrine so endeared to the memories of the whole Christian world. St. Francis expired in his cell at Santa Maria degli Angeli, but his remains are interred here, where the piety of the middle ages has raised this majestic monument of sculpture, architecture, and painting—the very harvest of the period—to his name.

A very long flight of dark stairs conducted us to the upper church, which we entered somewhat abruptly near the altar. This church, which I had expected to find very splendid, disappointed me. It is bare and bald compared with the gorgeously-frescoed walls beneath; and the full glare of day through lancet windows of plain glass appeared quite profane after the solemn-tinted half-light below. The light of day, which displeases me in any church, seemed peculiarly out of place in this sanctuary, reared over the grave of one

who voluntarily shut out the outward light, and lived apart and alone, in mystical communion with heaven. The altar wants magnificence. It is surmounted by some curious Gothic arches, and enclosed by a choir, with stalls of wood-mosaics of the most wonderful beauty and finish. Here are portraits of saints and fathers, lifelike in action and expression—and a head of the Virgin, with a drapery after the manner of Bellini, which struck me as one of the sweetest countenances I had ever seen. Of the stalls there are one hundred and two; all the mosaic-work having been executed by a monk of the convent named Fra Domenico di San Severino.

This upper church is also lined with frescoes, both on the walls and ceiling—the works of Cimabue and of Giotto. The ceiling is painted in alternate compartments of figures, with gold stars on a deep blue ground; but these frescoes were exceedingly injured by the French during their occupation of Assisi. They broke the windows, admitted the rain and damp, and damaged paintings till then fresh and bright after the lapse of so many centuries. Casting my eye around on the curious frescoes, where ignorance of the canons of art and consummate genius are quaintly visible, I was caught by one of the series containing St.

Francis's life. He is represented ascending through the air to heaven in a monstrously awkward red car, little suited, certainly, for such an aërial voyage. It is shaped like the *carro* one sees commonly drawn by oxen; but this heavenly chariot is dragged over very material-looking clouds by a pair of fat Flemish horses, quite a match for the vehicle. St. Francis acts as the Jehu, holding his reins much after the style of Olympian Jove. Could he have conducted such a vehicle over infinite space, it would certainly have been the most extraordinary miracle recorded in saintly annals. There is another fresco in the same series—both attributed to Giotto—where the saint is represented in a pretty garden, surrounded by trees and verdure, preaching to little birds grouped about him, or flying to him through the air in the utmost haste. There is some water, too, introduced, and the fishes' heads are visible, poked up with an air of the utmost attention towards St. Francis, who stands in a persuasive attitude with extended arms. I suppose a smile was visible on our countenances, for the monk laughed outright at the childish conceit, and indeed throughout manifested a very decided disposition to ridicule the extravagance of the saint's miraculous gifts. "*Ah,*" said he, "*è un' allegoria, tutta questa, non è la verità!*" which

fact we scarcely required to be told. Everything connected with these paintings of Cimabue and Giotto is deeply interesting; but the more I looked, the more I was disappointed with the garish air of the upper church, and its total want of grandeur. It is, however, considered a perfect model of Gothic architecture, which, in truth, I required to be told. We made our exit by the grand portal, where there is a large wheel window, in the centre of a fine façade. We had entered below, on a level with the middle church; but, from the rapid rise of the acclivity against which the church is built, we were still on a level with the ground. We emerged on a spacious, lonely, green piazza. Beyond were the time-worn, rusty-looking walls of the town.

Here, again, we fell victims to the beggars, who, hearing that a party of *forestieri* were exploring the churches, watched us round, and came out strong and fresh on the green turf. But for Mr. B——'s tall figure and stern and somewhat morose countenance, which imposed respect, I should have been positively frightened lest the beggars in this solitary corner might not have rapidly passed into brigands and robbed me. We selected from the group an intelligent lad as a guide to our carriage, which had gone a tour on

its own account, and was nowhere visible. Up and down we trudged, through desolate, half-ruined streets, and under high walls, until I thought our guide himself was misleading us. At last we emerged on the grand piazza of Assisi, a wretched square, save and except for some noble Roman pillars and a portico fronting what once had been a temple of Minerva, now of course a church. The symmetry of this classical façade is exquisite. The columns are in a much finer state of preservation than the much-boasted Roman pillars of San Lorenzo at Milan, which were so carefully protected by Napoleon. I wonder one does not hear more of this beautiful temple, more perfect than anything at Rome, except the Pantheon.

Our *calèche* was in waiting, and we were soon rattling down the rapid descent from Assisi to Foligno, where our *vetturino* awaited us. As we descended, fine views over the plain beneath opened out from between the trees. The valley of the Tiber, which lay stretched out before us, is so richly cultivated as to be actually monotonous. Perugia was just visible in front, nobly crowning a height, encircled by rugged mountains. To the left lay Foligno and various other small towns, each town crested with dark cypresses or pine trees. Behind towered Assisi, high up in the

Apennines, crowned by its ruined fortress. After about two hours' most agreeable drive, we reached Foligno.

CHAPTER VII.

The Forum by Day—The Coliseum—Golden House of Nero and the Games of the Amphitheatre.

CONGREVE makes one of his characters declare "that his name is Truth, and that he has very few acquaintances." Had I lived nearer his time I should have thought he had an eye to me, for I have all my life steadfastly proposed to tell the truth, and have rendered myself unaccountably unpopular by so doing. I also propose to tell the truth in this rough Diary—its only merit. I will not admire a picture or a statue because Winckelmann praises it, or fall into raptures over tottering walls and clumsy pillars because they bear high-sounding names. In my character of truth-teller I propose to visit the Roman Forum. Now, I am certain that no human being ever visited that far-famed valley of glory and misery, *for the first time*, without positive disappointment; only people will fly into high-flown raptures—raptures in which, indeed, I would willingly join,

were association *alone* the question. But the Forum in broad daylight is in reality a bare, dusty, bald-looking place, with very little to see *at all*, so entirely are all vestiges of its former magnificence destroyed. The Capitoline Hill, crowned by the modern Campidoglio, built over the remains of the Tabularium, stands on a gentle eminence, and presents all the incongruities of the back of an unfinished building. The windows and the walls might belong to any other house, and be considered rather untidy and incomplete; and the small bell-tower in the centre of the roof would appropriately crown a Dissenting meeting-house. Below, among the foundations, yawn some arches formed of uncemented blocks, and solid masses of stonework in deep-down pits, of which there is just sufficient to recall their fabulous antiquity, and to remind us that in those vaults were religiously preserved the Sibylline books, consulted when there was "anything rotten in the state" of Rome.

Very much below the modern road crossing the Forum, on which I take my stand, deep excavations under the base of the hill display the remains of various temples, masses of stone, former foundations, capitals, and broken marble pillars, crowded heterogeneously about the still remaining

upright pillars, of which there are not a dozen standing, and those, to the eye of a rationalist, piled in such confusion, that, without the aid of books and antiquarian theories, it would be impossible to trace out any imaginable disposition or arrangement. No spot in the world has so fruitfully employed the learned pens of antiquaries; and because it is a Sphinx-riddle no god will reveal, everybody, with equal reason, calls them by a new name—Canina, Murray, Niebuhr, Braun, all employ their own nomenclature—which imposes the scandal of endless *aliases* on the venerable ruins. At first I was so confused that I never called them by any name; for I was sure to be wrong whatever I said, and to stand corrected, though I might, had I loved disputations, have held my ground, having made antiquity my constant study.

These temples, then, which must have stood inconveniently close together, are a vexation and a confusion. To the left, on the Tarpeian Rock, where once stood the citadel and the temple of Juno Moneta, houses and courts, dirty, black, and filthy, crowd upon each other. The republican government of ancient Rome, after the stern sentence passed on Manlius, razed his house, and forbade that henceforth any private dwelling

should be erected on the Capitol or the citadel. But the long course of ages appears to have weakened this decree; for a fashionable antiquary once arranged a little roost on the forbidden ground, under the shadow of the Prussian eagle, whose embassy is also perched precisely on the site of the ancient citadel on the Tarpeian Rock. No rock, however, is to be seen. The elevation is very slight, save on one side (overlooking the Piazza del Torre di Specchio), "the Traitor's Leap," where a man might still break his ankle-bone perhaps if he tried, and certainly would die of the suffocating atmosphere and bad smells of the neighbourhood. A steep road descends on this side into the Forum, a valley, oblong in shape, extending about seven hundred and fifty feet, and on the further side of the Campidoglio a flight of steps also leads downwards.

Beyond the Campidoglio a second hill, corresponding with the elevation of the citadel, indicates the site of the once famous temple of Jupiter Capitolinus, now replaced by the formless and really hideous church of the Ara Coeli, a mass of brown stones, like an architectural chaos, "without form and void;" but the accumulated earth still faithfully evidences where once stood the magnificent temple. Descending from hence the

flight of steps towards the Forum, the Arch of Septimius Severus is passed, a perfect and striking monument covered with basso-relievi, and bearing an inscription, where the name of Geta is plainly wanting, having been erased by the fratricide Caracalla, after he became emperor. Standing as it does, however, in an excavation, on a level with the temples, the arch is so low and deeply sunk that it appears utterly shorn of its proportions and dignity. Beneath, and passing through it, some large blocks of stone, once forming part of the Clivus Capitolinus, are still visible. The position of the Forum is indicated by a large square excavation, more remarkable for its filth than for the minute remains of broken columns visible—remains conveying neither dignity nor interest to the uninformed eye. Another and a smaller excavation, strewn with fragments of capitals, blocks of marble, and the remains of a few more pillars, include *all* pertaining to the Forum and Comitium now visible; and it is by means of books alone, and deep research and antiquarian knowledge, aided by strong powers of imagination, that we can build up these arcades, reconstruct these temples, and lend form, symmetry, and splendour to a scene positively repulsive in its actual appearance. Nothing can be

more modern than the general aspect of the buildings—mostly churches—erected on the traditional sites of the pagan temples bordering the sides of the Forum. The modern Romans seemed to have proposed to themselves in their erection to wage the most determined war against any stray memories which might be evoked by the least vestige of ancient remains. Walls, pillars, and porticoes are ruthlessly built into the present structures, themselves as commonplace and uninteresting as whitewash and stucco can make them.

Proceeding along what was once the "Sacred Way," now a very dusty modern road, first in order appears the church of San Giuseppe of the Carpenters, its façade gaily painted with coarse frescoes. It is built over the Mamertine prisons, which I shall visit later.

Next comes the church of Santa Martina, which is connected with the Accademia di San Luca. It is said to be built on the spot where once stood a temple to Mars, or, as some say, the "Secretarium Senatus." Martina, a noble Roman virgin who heroically sacrificed her life to the Christian faith, now triumphs in death within a richly decorated tomb, in her subterranean church at the foot of that Capitol whose steps her an-

cestors so often mounted as conquerors, senators, and priests.

The adjoining church of San Adriano is supposed to mark the site of the Basilica Æmilia, built in the time of Augustus; a portion of the front, formed of bricks, is all that remains.

Immediately following is the church of SS. Cosimo e Damiano, twin brothers, born in Arabia, who finally suffered martyrdom under Diocletian after twice miraculously escaping from the sea and the stake. These brothers were canonised, as it would seem, by the Catholic Church, to recall the popular worship of Romulus and Remus (on whose ruined temple the church was erected) under a Christian aspect. The magnificent mosaic of the apsis—one of the most perfect in the world—divides attention with the remnants of the original temple, now consecrated as a second and subterraneous church.

The church of San Lorenzo in Miranda is faced by an ancient portico composed of ten imposing though much injured Corinthian columns, now deprived of half their original height, and unmercifully squeezed by the façade of the insignificant modern church, bearing on a frieze an inscription showing the ancient temple to have been dedicated to the "divine Antoninus and

Faustina." This portico was excavated during the visit of the Emperor Charles V. to Rome.

Standing somewhat back from the line we have hitherto followed are the three huge arches of an immense ruin formerly known as the Temple of Peace. Many descriptions have come down to us of this stately monument. The roof was incrustured with gilt bronze, and supported by stupendous columns; the interior was enriched with the finest statues and pictures of the Grecian schools. Here were deposited the spoils brought from Jerusalem by Titus, forming a vast public treasury.

Besides the three arches of this majestic ruin, now bare and stripped to the brick walls, all that remains in evidence of its former splendour is one beautiful Corinthian column, cruelly removed from the spot and placed in front of the basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore. It was originally one of the eight exquisite marble pillars which decorated the interior temple. In these latter days the ruin is known as the Basilica, begun by Maxentius, and finished by Constantine, after the battle of Ponte Molle had ended that tyrant's life and reign. According to the present version we must consider this lofty structure only as belonging to "modern Rome," for in that interminable chain of centuries that unlink before one in ex-

amining the historic antiquities of Rome, the third or fourth century counts but as yesterday. I for myself prefer the Catholic account, as being the most poetic. According to that, this edifice was built by Augustus in memory of the peace given to the world by the battle of Actium. Wishing to know how long the solid walls would stand, he consulted the oracle, which replied, "*Quoadusque virgo pariat*" ("Until a virgin bears a son"). The Romans considered this a promise of immortality, and anticipated an eternal existence for the new Temple of Peace; but the same night that saw the Saviour's birth in Bethlehem, the walls of the pagan temple shook and fell; fire suddenly and mysteriously issued from the ground, and the sumptuous pile was consumed.

The modern church of Santa Francesca Romana is built on part of the remains of the temple of Venus and of Rome, designed by the Emperor Adrian, forming one angle of the long-shaped square which marks the valley of the Forum. It is a curious coincidence that on the site of the former temple of "Venus the Happy," Catholic Rome should have dedicated a church to the memory of a Roman matron renowned for her rigid virtue.

Eusebius, the father of ecclesiastical history,

furnishes us with a curious fact in connection with this church. He assures us that the apostles St. Peter and St. Paul visited Rome—an historic fact my own rampant Protestantism, on first arriving at Rome, made me culpably doubt. He recounts that the magician, Simon Magus, had preceded them there, and, in order to neutralise their preaching, gave himself out as a god. The Emperor Nero admired him, and statues were already raised to his honour. In order to give a convincing and visible proof of his divinity, the impostor announced that he would publicly raise himself in the air without assistance, and selected the theatre of Nero's golden house as the spot where the proposed prodigy was to take place. All Rome assembled in expectant wonder, and the emperor himself was present in the vestibule of his palace; but St. Peter, who had arrived in Rome unknown to Simon Magus, was also there; and as the magician mounted boldly into mid-air, the Apostle knelt down and prayed earnestly that his blasphemy might be punished. As the arrow flies from the bow, so was the Apostle's prayer heard and answered. Simon suddenly fell to the earth and was killed, and the stone on which St. Peter knelt retained the impression of his knee, and is visible now in the interior of the church,

on the very spot where it is said his prayers were offered—"Una cosa," as the Italians say, "*di gran divozione.*"

Situated on slightly rising ground stands next in order the beautiful Arch of Titus, on a level with the present surface, and therefore seen to much better advantage than its opposite neighbour, the sunken Arch of Septimius Severus. The basso-relievi are remarkably clear and distinct, and the sculptures on the arch indicate a period before the decline of art. On the inner side of the arch, Titus appears in basso-relievo, seated in a triumphal car, conducted by the Genius of Rome, and attended by Victory crowning him with laurels; opposite are the spoils of the Temple—the table of shew-bread, the seven-branched candlestick, the jubilee trumpets, and the incense vessels.

The Jews from the dirty Ghetto never cease to contemplate this monument with profound sorrow and violent indignation. They hate the Romans, past, present, and to come, as the devastators of that shrine, more glorious, in their imagination, than the burnished pillars of the golden sun supporting the opening vaults of morning! A Jew would rather die than pass under that arch, which accounts for the little foot-paths formed on either side. But it is in vain to

dispute the Almighty will; the monument of their servitude is not to be ignored, nor the prophecy forgotten which was wrung from our Lord by the hard impiety of the Jewish nation—"Verily, I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down."

Continuing my tour round the modern Forum, the steep sides of the Palatine Hill now break the view, rising abruptly aloft, dark, ominous, and gloomy—a hillside on which grow no flowers, where the sun never shines, desolate and uninhabited, broken into deep chasms, and scattered over with huge fragments—broken terraces and shattered arches heaped on each other in indescribable confusion. Grass and reeds, low shrubs and twining vines, overmantle the sombre ruins, and on the summit of the hill rises a sacred wood of evergreen trees, fit diadem for its frowning brow. There is a repulsive grandeur about the stern decay of the Palatine; and, though crumbling into dust, far more exciting to my imagination than the cheerful, sunny, modernly-built, and thickly-populated quarter of the Capitoline Mount, where the past wrestles in vain with the present, and loses all dignity in the encounter.

Under the Palatine a large space of muddy, uneven ground marks the place where the cattle-

market is held; for (O horrid sacrilege!) not only its dignity but its very name has passed away, and the ancient Forum is now only known to the degenerate modern Romans by its designation of "*Campo Vaccino!*"

At all times are to be seen here herds of slate-coloured oxen—meek, quiet-looking beasts with enormous horns, ruminating beside the frame-carts they draw—and ferocious buffaloes, bending their heads indeed under the yoke, but always rolling around their vicious, untamed eyes. Also Velletri wine-carts, drawn by single horses, with odd one-sided hoods or screens, to shield the driver from the sun and rain, which hood contains often a cross and a small image of the Madonna, to say nothing of a little store of knives, forks, bottles, and pistols. The drivers, with their pointed hats and sunburnt handsome faces, are now resting beside these original conveyances, side by side with the *contadini* belonging to the oxen—dull, stolid-looking barbarians, who seem to live only to drink and to sleep. There they all rest in picturesque groups (for somehow or other the *pose* of the most common and clownish Italian is always picturesque) under the dark shadow of the Palatine.

Further on, where now stand the churches of

Santa Maria Liberatrice and San Teodoro (San Toto), the Curia Julia, first called Curia Hostilia, was situated, built by Julius Cæsar, and embellished by Augustus, being the place where he convoked the senate. In the centre, on the site of the house built for Valerius Publicola by a grateful people, stood a statue and temple of Victory, while near it was held the slave-market of ancient Rome—that numerous and accursed race, which so often threatened, murdered, and oppressed their haughty masters, intriguing on the very steps of the throne, and sacrificing even the lives of the deified Cæsars to their lust of power, foul passions, and extravagant caprices. The temple of Vesta stood in this part of the Forum, and the Spoliarium of Sylla, a human slaughter-house, daily filled during his dictatorship with the heads of illustrious senators and patricians. Aloft, extending from hill to hill, stretched a bridge constructed by the insane Caligula, in order to enable the deified monster to pass from the imperial palace on the Palatine to offer sacrifices in the temple of the Capitol without crossing the Forum. Of all these structures no vestige remains.

The church of San Toto (behind the Roman Forum, on the way to the Forum Boarium) stands on the supposed site of the *Lupercal*, where, says

Shakespeare's Mark Antony, in his famous oration over the body of Cæsar, "I thrice presented him a kingly crown, which he did thrice refuse." At hand stood, in early times, the temple of Romulus, on the spot where the twin brothers were discovered by the shepherd.

To the formation of the Cloaca Maxima, and other contrivances for draining the marshy ground between the Palatine, Aventine, and Capitoline Hills, must be attributed the altered current of the Tiber, now full a quarter of a mile distant from the traditionary spot where the cradle containing the Alban twins touched the shore. The river being much swollen, the cradle dashed against a stone at a place called Arnanum, and was overturned. The cries of the infants frightened away the shepherds, but attracted the she-wolf by which they were tended until Laurentia, the wife of Faustulus, first saw and bore them to her hut near the Velabrum. The whole story, says Dionysius, was in his day recorded in bronze, in a grotto dedicated to Pan, near a wood also dedicated to the sylvan deities, on the way to the Circus Maximus.

The modern church of San Toto affords little interest. It lies much below the level of the present road leading towards the Aventine, and,

darkly overshadowed by the ruins on the summit of the Palatine, wears a sombre aspect. In a *cortile* before the entrance appear some slight remains of an altar; but otherwise the church, which is circular, and about the same size as the temple of Vesta, has a provokingly modern air; especially the interior, glaringly painted and vulgarly decorated. Miraculous powers are supposed to belong to this church, where the modern Roman *canaglia* to this day constantly bring new-born infants whose lives are in danger. In like manner, ancient Romans are known to have believed that the temple of Romulus possessed miraculous powers of healing infants. Strange contradiction! while close at hand lay the sombre lake of the Velabrum, on whose marshy shores the offspring of illicit love, the children of slaves, and the weak and deformed infants of both patricians and plebeians, were barbarously exposed to perish.

San Teodoro, to whom the church is now dedicated, was a military martyr, soldier of Maximian. He suffered martyrdom for setting fire to a temple where the sight of some obscene pagan rite roused his indignation. When asked by the magistrate why he had so acted, he replied, "I am a Christian, and should do the like again." He was torn with iron pincers until his veins and

muscles were laid bare and he expired. His church is opposite that of Santa Martina, on the other side of the Forum. Thus the Christian soldier and the patrician virgin, both martyrs, stand glorious sentinels at the entrance of this classic valley.

The last of the churches surrounding the Forum is the small and quite modern church of Santa Maria Liberatrice, which, gay in whitewash and colours, certainly does not recall by its aspect the temple of Vesta built by Numa, whose site it occupies.

I have now completed the circuit of the modern Forum, and described it as at present it appears. If the heroic deeds of Roman history rendered this ground and these ruins famous, Christian fortitude and heavenly virtues have also set on them an indelible and immortal imprint. Many of that glorious army of martyrs who stand beside the great white throne, holding their crowns and singing eternal hosannas to the blessed Three, once traversed the Forum, passing along the "Sacred Way" to win their cross within the walls of the Flavian Amphitheatre. They, too, gazed on these stately buildings and lofty palaces as they took their last look on the outward world. Many Ro-

man martyrs were of exalted rank, and claimed friends and relatives among the stern senators sitting on the curule chairs under the long-drawn colonnades. The Christian history of Rome yields neither in heroism, devotion, dramatic incident, thrilling interest, nor unflinching stoicism to the much-studied pagan annals.

I returned into the Forum. The afternoon was now come, together with a heterogeneous crowd lounging about in all directions. The modern Romans are easily recognisable as they slowly saunter along, wholly regardless of the celebrated scene of their ancestors' greatest triumphs. No wonder: they simply consider it as a dirty space devoted to the sale of cattle. We are not given to studying English history in Smithfield; and to them the Forum presents as few attractions. As decidedly are the English recognised by their trivial and restless curiosity, the questions they ask, and the ignorance they betray. Carriage after carriage may be seen driving up, and party after party of extravagantly-dressed ladies may be seen dismounting in the dirt at various points of peculiar interest, only to peep and peer about as did the famous Davis for pickles in the vases of Pompeii. The vexatious mass of nameless temples particularly engages their attention, and they stand,

"Murray" in hand, resolutely decided on understanding what is not understandable. When I see these antiquarian butterflies, attended generally by a servant in livery and a pet spaniel, I confess I am disgusted. Here and there a quiet, unassuming party of plainly-dressed Germans appear, industriously working their way along, really seeming to approach the place in a right spirit of earnest inquiry; or some solitary traveller, *en grande barbe*, smoking a cigar—sure to be a French *savant*—evidently absorbed and overwhelmed by the rich tide of recollections rising around. A long procession of *frati*, enveloped in black robes and hoods, streams along towards the Coliseum, carrying a large black cross, chanting sad and dismal hymns that echo harmoniously amid the fallen and decaying precincts of the past. Americans abound, active, talkative, and unsympathetic. What sympathy can youth have with decrepitude?—the enterprising young world, springing into life and greatness (rejoicing in liberty and freedom), with the mouldering remains of former tyrants? But whether they come to *say* they have seen, or in reality to worship art at the fallen altars of false gods, they come kindly, Christianly. Neither *morgue*, reserve, nor pride marks their manners; nor do they affect the exclusive indifference of

that young English lady who, visiting the Forum for the *first time*, is seated in her carriage deeply engaged in reading the *Times*.

I was invited the other night by Lady Anne St. G—— to go with her to see the Coliseum lit up with coloured lights, in honour of some French notabilities just arrived at Rome. I thought it sounded very barbarous; but I went. It was a lovely evening in May, that most charming of all months in an Italian climate. The Coliseum rose before us, serenely beautiful in the mournful moonlight, breathing a monumental melancholy which was absolutely pathetic. Those almost articulate walls possess an unspoken eloquence intelligible to the wanderers of all lands. Like the old Memnon statue, they breathe out music; a chord, a note, a thought, a memory, strikes home, and an undying recollection is borne away in every heart. At this season the great ruin is enveloped in delicious groves; beautiful walks are formed around it, planted with graceful acacia trees, the branches, now weighed down by snowy blossoms, perfuming the night air almost oppressively. As we strolled about the gigantic ruins and up and down the moonlit arcades, unspeakable hope and peace came into my soul. Angels seemed to look down from the star-sown heavens,

and the spirits of slaughtered saints to sanctify the scene of their martyrdom. Looking at the moon, clear and argentine as a silver mirror, the ills and troubles of this life faded away like a vain and troubled dream. I rejoiced that God had made the world so fair, and had permitted me thus to enjoy it. Oh! it was well with me on that peaceful night, and with so congenial a companion as walked beside me! She, being a devout Catholic, contemplated the scene with a religious enthusiasm in which I could scarcely join. She recalled to me that curious prophecy recorded by the Venerable Bede, as repeated by the Anglo-Saxon pilgrims of his day:—

“While stands the Coliseum, Rome shall stand;
When falls the Coliseum, Rome shall fall;
And when Rome falls—the world!”

Standing under the black shadows, cutting the ground with almost palpable lines, how clear and bright shone out the snowy walls—beautiful as some fairy palace built for a magician’s bride, and soft and mellow as the heavens above! This partial light, half concealing, half displaying interminable successions of arches, led the eye through mysterious vistas marked here and there by an oblique ray of moonlight, on to the central space, where altars, and mouldering galleries, and

terraced colonnades swam in a sea of subdued splendour. From the Baths of Titus, on a rising ground near by, a wood of pomegranates descended towards the Coliseum, and we could just discern the thousand crimson flowers among the rich dark leaves. To the right, buried in deep shadow, rose the Arch of Constantine. Through the three arches that pierce its massive façade the moon cast long lines of brightness on the ruined mass of the once brilliant fountain of the Meta Sudans, where, through a perforated column surmounted by a colossal statue of Jupiter, an abundant stream descended into a vast marble basin for the use of the athletes and gladiators of the amphitheatre. Close by, a few rough stones indicate the pedestal where stood this colossal statue that gave its name to the beauteous structure. After decorating the golden house of Nero, it was removed by Vespasian to this amphitheatre, which he was then erecting at the extremity of the Via Sacra, and transformed into the image of Apollo. Stupendous rays of glory surrounded the head. Adrian removed it a second time, and Commodus changed it into a likeness of himself. The golden house of Nero and the Coliseum! What a whole history lies in those names;—what deeds—what emperors—what saints—what crimes uprose! Where we

now stood in the peaceful moonlight a lake once existed; and, surrounding its shores, that golden palace of Nero, which was a city in itself. Not satisfied with the already overgrown palace on the Palatine, which had contented other Cæsars, and also finding his abode at the Vatican too small, he extended his new palace over the entire area of the Esquiline (Santa Maria Maggiore), the Cœlian (San Giovanni Laterano), and the Palatine, with which it was connected by a bridge. Within its walls were "expansive lakes and fields of vast extent, intermixed with pleasing variety; woods and forests stretched to an interminable length, presenting gloom and solitude amidst scenes of open space, where the eye wandered with surprise over an unbounded prospect."* The palace itself stood in the centre of this elysium, colossal in proportion and fabulous in splendour. The Temple of Peace, of prodigious height, formed the vestibule, surrounded by a triple range of columns of the most exquisite marble. From the vestibule opened the *atrium*, a hall of extraordinary magnificence, gorgeous with statues, paintings, ivory, mosaics, marbles, and gold, large enough to serve for the assembly of the senate, when it suited the caprice of the tyrant to gather

* Tacitus.

them there. A splendid portal opened on the lake; Suetonius says "it was like a sea surrounded with palaces," which its waters doubled in reflecting. Opposite the portal was placed the colossal statue of Nero, one hundred and twenty feet high, a statue whose subsequent vicissitudes I have mentioned. Deified during his life, his image was surrounded by a golden nimbus, and, like Nebuchadnezzar, Nero exacted divine honours in his own palace. The ceilings of the different halls were covered with plates of gold, set off by diamonds and precious stones; the walls were decorated with gilding and the most exquisite paintings and statues: the floors inlaid, as with costly embroidery, with those unrivalled mosaics of which many specimens taken from contemporary ruins still remain. The *triclinium*, or eating-room, was surrounded by turning panels of ebony incrustated with ivory, from whence flowers and perfumes descended on the guests, who lay extended on couches spread with roses and myrtles, wearing garlands of odoriferous flowers. All that earth, sea, or air furnished most rare and delicate, was served up in vases of gold and silver, sometimes to the number of twenty-two different courses. Several slaves were placed near each guest, some to fan him, and some to chase away

the flies with branches of myrtle. Musicians filled the air with delicious symphonies, and troops of young children executed voluptuous dances, accompanied by the merry clatter of the castanets. Anon the walls folded away like a screen, and displayed a theatre, where the sight of the gladiators' bloody combats gave the last *gusto* to the banquet; they were even introduced into the very room, and slew each other in the imperial presence. Sometimes the entertainment was varied by combats of men and animals. Artificial groves surrounded the lake, where, among the branches, silver birds of the finest workmanship represented peacocks, swans, and doves. The baths presented every refinement of luxury. They glittered with gold, silver, marble, and fresco mosaic, and were often used three times in one day.

Within these halls of fabulous luxury did the voluptuous Nero—the tyrant, comedian, and poet—abandon himself to every vice; he sang, he wrestled, he drove chariots, he shed torrents of innocent blood. Here his passion kindled for Poppæa, during the lifetime of the innocent Octavia, who expiated the crime of having thwarted the monster's caprice by her speedy banishment and murder in the island of Pandataria. Poppæa's voice, which had often waked the echoes

of these golden halls by her violent reproaches, was heard no more upbraiding; in becoming empress, she was satisfied. *Cui bono?* She in her turn soon fell a victim to Nero's cruelty.

Here died Britannicus, poisoned while his brother's guest at one of these epicurean banquets; and here did Nero meditate the murder of his mother Agrippina—a crime so unnatural that it even startled the depraved and brutalised Romans! And what remains of this imperial pomp? A few stones and rubbish, the ruined pedestal where once stood the colossal image, and some deep-buried subterraneous chambers filled with bricks and lime. The neighbouring Baths of Titus were built over part of the golden house—and why? Because the memory of Nero was so execrated that Rome considered it a scandal and a disgrace to allow one stone to rest upon another of the palace which had sheltered him.

Then there came a great change over that world-stage. A notable act was finished in the universal drama, and the curtain of oblivion fell on many actors. When it again rose a new dynasty sat on the throne of the Cæsars, and victories and triumphs, the glory of the Roman eagles and the iron bravery of the legions, filled the heart of the great city with joy.

Where had stood the golden house appeared now two remarkable objects—the Arch of Titus and the Flavian Amphitheatre. Later came the Arch of Constantine, forming a mystic triangle, standing as it were on the confines of ancient and modern Rome, symbolising Judaism and its conquest, paganism and its crimes, and Christianity bringing down heaven to earth in its angelic creed.

The mighty Coliseum standing before me was raised on a theatre of blood, and faithful to the traditions of the former palace, amid blood and tears, sorrow and despair, did those gigantic walls arise under the hands of the Jews brought captive by Titus from Jerusalem. Thousands and tens of thousands lay them down to die, wearied out and faint, beside their labour: for, incredible though it seems, the vast pile was certainly completed in *ten*, if not, according to some authorities, in *four* years.

Never were the four orders of architecture so harmoniously combined as in these arched walls, on which the shadows now fall so heavily in the moonlight. Successive masses of gloom indicate some of the many entrances, of which there are eighty, all numbered except one—the imperial ingress opposite the Palatine Hill, where was a subterranean passage constructed by Commodus, in which he was very nearly assassinated.

Among these openings one was named *Sandapilaria*, or *Libitinalis*; the other, *Sanavivaria*. Near the former was the *Spoliarium*, where the bodies of men and beasts killed on the arena were thrown pell-mell; an awful charnel-house, which must have overflowed when imperial Titus inaugurated his amphitheatre by games which lasted one hundred days, and five thousand wild beasts and many thousand gladiators were killed.

Waiting for the arrival of the company, we had quietly paced round and round the Coliseum. I devoutly hoped they would not come, but at last, after a long space, Count Z—— and a whole tribe of French ladies made their appearance. The French Zouave at first positively refused to let us enter.

"*On ne passe pas par ici*," echoed through the colonnade.

"*Comment!*" cried one of his countrywomen; "*vous êtes Français et si peu galant? Mon Dieu!*" added she, turning to Count Z——; "*c'est qu'il faut qu'il y ait bien longtemps qu'il a quitté la France!*"

Count Z—— expostulated in Italian, talking as rapidly as Figaro, declared he had a *permesso*, got furious and excited, and swore classical oaths; but it was all of no use. The musket still barred

the entrance, and the man was immovable. To be sure, it was enough to anger any one less excitable than an Italian, to have invited a large party there and not to be able to get in. Count Z—— rushed frantically about, clutching his hair, and looking quite melodramatic, with his Spanish cloak draped around him. At last the *scena* ended in our favour by the appearance of the custode from within, who at once cleared the way.

“*Mon ami,*” said the French lady to the Zouave as she passed him, “*souvenez-vous toujours qu’un Français doit faire partout place aux dames.*”

The Coliseum by moonlight is very beautiful; a dim mysterious look hangs about the walls half sunk in deepest gloom, half revealed in the clear moonlight; yet I cannot say that to me it appeared more impressive than by day, though certainly more poetical. I had gone with a vague, undefined idea of something wonderful, and I was disappointed. The coloured lights were barbarous, and made the venerable ruin look like a scene in an extravaganza. One fine effect was produced by placing large torches of pitch under a series of arches in the upper stories, bringing out grandly every over-arching line and pillar, even the long grass trailing in the breeze, while all the foreground was buried in gloom. For my own

part, I prefer the Coliseum as I have seen it on a Friday afternoon, when the black penitents are grouped around the altars and about the central cross, mingled with groups of Roman women in their picturesque dresses, all kneeling in various attitudes of deep devotion, a mellow wintry sun lighting up the whole.

While the French ladies, attended by the now radiant count, raced about the galleries, appearing and disappearing among the arches in the red and blue lights, like a *sabbat* of witches, I sat down on the steps of the black cross planted in the centre of the arena, and fell to rebuilding and repeopling those mighty galleries.

The space around is deep in sand, and lions, panthers, and bears roar in their barred cages on a level with the arena. The imperial door (which bears no name engraven on it) opens, and the emperor enters, gorgeously appavelled in the imperial purple, wearing on his head a crown of gold. He is followed by the court, also in magnificent apparel, brilliant as stars, but of inferior magnitude. Next following are the vestal virgins, robed in white draperies and purple mantles, and the senate arrayed in white togas with embroidered borders of gold. These all take their places on the lowest gallery, the *podium*, protected by a

golden network. Eighty-seven thousand spectators pour in, and fill those upper ranges of seats in an instant, as if by magic; the matrons and virgins, resplendent in scarlet, purple, gold, and diamonds, forming a brilliant circle apart from the darker-robed men.

After the sacrifices, which always preceded the games, martial music thunders forth, and the gladiators appear, ranging themselves in two parallel lines, bearing whips with which they scourge the wretched *bestiarii*, who in a long line pass between them—slaves, prisoners, Christians, children, women, and old men—all devoted to die in the coming games. Preceded by a herald, the gladiators now pass in procession round the amphitheatre, bowing to the emperor, and exclaiming, "*Cæsar, morituri te salutant*" ("Cæsar, those about to die salute thee"). But the opening ceremonies are tedious to the impatient plebs, who roar and cry in the upper galleries, and will wait no longer, so *the vestals* give the signal to begin. The grated doors are raised, and the wild beasts rush like a hurricane over the arena—a hurricane that rains blood; for see in a moment the arms, legs, heads, and entrails that cover the sand! Troop after troop of *bestiarii* appear—the excitement is inflamed to madness—emperor, people, women,

vestals, gloat upon the sight of blood, and applaud and incite the hideous carnage. The *bestiarii* being all despatched, the attendants drag off the bodies into the Spoliarium: one of them is called Mercury, the other Pluto, and they bear the attributes of these divinities. Mercury touches the dying with a red-hot iron, and Pluto gives the *coup de grâce*. Handsome slaves, elegantly dressed, appear and rake over the sand to obliterate the traces of blood, while ingeniously-contrived gratings exude showers of perfumes over the amphitheatre. The *velarium* at the top, arranged so as to exclude the sun, undulates with an artificial movement, serving as a great fan or gigantic ventilator, while songs and symphonies are accompanied by an harmonious orchestra, and buffoons and tumblers amuse the audience.

But see! the gladiators mounted on splendid cars appear, and driving round, again salute the emperor. "*Cæsar, morituri te salutant*" resounds in chorus. They are dressed in short red or white tunics, with cinctures of worked leather: and each man bears a small shield, a trident, and a net. Some, however, have only a larger shield, and others carry a noose, or are armed with swords. They are mostly Gauls by birth, and are to fight both on horseback and on foot suc-

cessively, one troop after another, to vary the games by their particular modes of combat. Some there are, *sine missione*, self-doomed to death, and this fact has been duly noticed on the *manifesti* in order to draw more company. The trumpets sound—the fight has begun! The swords cross—lances meet—and blood again flows in copious streams. Yet the people grumble and hiss—death is too sudden; the combatants are to eke out life by wounds to the utmost moment—not to strike and kill. “There is no amusement in seeing a man die,” shouts one. “They are cowards, these gladiators,” cries another. “They want to live,” roars a third; but “They shall die,” sounds all around. And die they shall, for their life rests on the *vox populi*, and that is now raised in horrid yells and shouts, hoarse as with blood. The spectators rise *en masse*—the vestals, too, stretch forth their arms, and threaten with gestures worthy of the Furies, terrible, convulsive—the wretched gladiators are doomed, and fall to a man. Fresh gladiators appear, and are more prodigal of their blood; and as hideous wounds are inflicted, the cry “*Habet!*” or “*Hoc habet!*” flies round. Perhaps when one, who has fought nobly and interested the audience, is about to receive a death-blow, the thumb is *raised*, as the almost dying

gladiator appeals to the people, and he is spared. If the thumb be *lowered*, it is the sign of instant death, and the gladiator, holding in his hand the sword of his adversary, must direct the point against his own throat.*

This is a glorious exhibition, and each time it occurs maddens the whole audience with delight. The vestals, more furious than the one-breasted Amazons of yore, clap their hands with frantic applause, and the whole amphitheatre thrills with transports of savage excitement. Three times have the handsome slaves cleared the arena; three times the odoriferous perfumes have descended. The combats of man to man are over for this day, but yet the audience is not contented—more blood must flow; blood always, but with a variety. Some richly-dressed slaves appear with a brazier of burning coals. What can this signify? The people have heard of the heroic fortitude of Mutius Scaevola, but have not seen it; the degenerate descendants of the ancient Romans desire to behold represented the very act of their republican ancestor. A man advances into the midst of the arena, dressed in a *tunica incendialis* of sulphur; a lighted torch is held on each side; if he moves

* See note in Preface.

he burns; and in this position he parodies Mutius, and his right hand is burnt off! *Bestiarii* are again dragged forth, while, moving from the principal entrance, appear artificial mounds covered with trees, shrubs, and herbage; suddenly their sides collapse, and lions, bears, panthers, and bisons rush into the arena. The carnage recommences—blood again scents the air, and men and animals sink down on the sand in hideous death embraces. At last no more victims are left. A few savage animals remain masters of the field, and quietly sit down to crack the human bones around them.

Thus perished St. Ignatius, the Christian bishop, sent from the far East expressly to die in the Roman amphitheatre. He kneels in the midst of the arena, and the eyes of a hundred thousand spectators are bent upon him. "I am the Lord's wheat," exclaimed he, "and I must be broken by the teeth of the beasts before I can become the bread of Jesus Christ." While he yet speaks, two lions fling themselves upon him, and in a moment nothing is left but a few large bones. Armies of martyrs perished within these walls—perished by a like death, and died rejoicing—Eustace, and the Virgins Martina, Tatiana, and Prisca; Julius and Marius and the rest—whose spirits now re-

joice in glory. Oh, sublime and immortal idea of the Catholic Church to consecrate this detested spot, and plant a cross in the centre! "*In hoc signo vici.*" Here indeed is the Cross triumphant!

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CHAPTER VIII.

The Forum and the Capitol by Night—"In Memoriam"—Villa Borghese—Making a Saint—Museum—San Paolo Fuori le Mura.

THE French ladies were charmed with the coloured lights, and were having a game of hide-and-seek with the count in the lower gallery. Every one was talking. I pined for solitude, and wandered off along the Sacred Way towards the Forum. Once out of reach of the ladies' shrill voices, not a sound broke the solemn stillness of the night. The moon, yet high in the heavens, cast down her "dim religious light;" the stars shone out, leading the mind to other worlds, more glorious perchance than our own; the night breezes blew softly by, heavy with perfume.

Opposite to me, on a low hill, stood a lonely portico, its altar broken and its statue gone, once forming part of the magnificent temple designed and built by Adrian, and dedicated to Venus and to Rome. A forest of stately arcades on either side united the double portico elevated on marble

steps, conceived by the imperial architect as an improvement on the design of the famous Apollodorus, whose skill had roused his envy, and whose life was afterwards sacrificed by a too honest criticism of the emperor's design. Still, notwithstanding the disapprobation of Apollodorus, no temple in ancient Rome excelled it in grandeur. The remains of the pillared colonnade border the Sacred Way—that way still paved with the identical great blocks of stone worn by the chariot-wheels of old Rome! What a world of recollection does it not evoke! What tears have fallen here—what glory passed by! How many joyful feet have rushed along it—what noble blood has soiled it! Here passed the Emperors Augustus, Nero, Tiberius, Caligula, Domitian, gods and priests, to offer sacrifices in the great temple of Jupiter Capitolinus, “supremely great and good,” followed by the most gorgeous trains the sun ever shone upon. Here passed the triumphant generals and commanders seated in burnished chariots of gold—Trajan and Titus and Julius Cæsar, Pompey and Sylla, and so many others, crowned with martial laurels won from barbarian nations whose names the world scarce knew—bearing the front of celestial Jove himself in their high pride, as the voices of assembled thousands proclaimed them “saviours of

their country," and saluted the victorious legions in their train. Slowly and wearily over those great stones long lines of captives dragged their clanking chains. Here passed the Apostles Peter and Paul to the damp vaults of the Mamertine prison; and here the captive Jews, chained to the car of victorious Titus, licked the dust before the Roman plebeians. And if tears have fallen, blood has also been spilt. The aged Galba tottered along it towards the *Milliarum Aureum*, when, regardless of his grey hairs, the savage soldiers mercilessly massacred him, opposite the Forum, in face of the Roman people, who dared not raise a voice to stay the cruel deed. Vitellius, too, was dragged half clothed along the Sacred Way, like a beast to be slaughtered in the shambles. Here in early times the wicked Tullia drove in her chariot to the Forum, where sat her husband Lucius, the murderer of her father, whom she saluted king. Here Messalina, proud as Juno, flaunted her voluptuous charms and perfumed vestments. Lucretia's footsteps often pressed these stones when, still a proud and happy wife, she passed to sacrifice in the temple of Juno, where none but the chastest matrons dared to enter. Out by hence Volumnia and Virgilia sped, fired with the high resolve of saving prostrate Rome; and here, too, on her

way to school, went young Virginia, the sweetest maid in Rome,

"With her small tablets in her hand,
And her satchel on her arm."

The elegant Horace himself tells us he loved to saunter here and criticise the passing scene; and Cicero, with his imperious wife, Terentia—and Catullus and Tacitus—and Livy, all in their day traversed this great world-thoroughfare, ever ebbing and flowing with multitudes from the basilicas, the temples, the forums, and the circus that bordered its sides: those sides where stood strange uncouth elephants of bronze side by side with the statue of Horatius, who nobly held the bridge against the Etruscan army, and of the brave maiden Clœlia, who, rather than dwell longer in the camp of her country's enemies, trusted herself and her companions to the waters of Father Tiber, "to whom the Romans pray."

And now I have reached the Forum. How lovely it is here under this mild and tempered light! No harsh lines—no rude contrasts—no incongruous colours now break the spell that haunts the scene of the mighty past. The lonely marble pillars stand out clear and bright, linking together historic memories of the splendour with which it was once adorned. Lofty arches appear, bearing

no marks of decay, but fresh and snowy as when first dug from the marble quarries; and deep porticoes cast long shadows over the modern buildings, which now shrink back, ashamed to obtrude on this honoured ground haunted by the memories of heroic deeds, and consecrated in the page of history above any other spot on God's wide earth. It is an awful and a solemn thing to visit the valley of the Forum by night; the darkness of ages and the dimness of decay are imaged by the heavy gloom that then hangs around these mysterious precincts—precincts haunted by the mighty dead, whose shadows seem yet to linger about the habitations they loved so well when living. Yonder stood that venerable Forum, the hearth and home of early as of imperial Rome; the market, the exchange, the judgment-seat, the promenade, the parliament, where lived, and moved, and loved, and fought that iron nation predestined to possess the earth, founded (in the fabulous days when the world was young, and the gods loved "the daughters of men") by Romulus on the field where he waged battle with the Sabine forces. Finding that his troops were flying before the enemy, and that no one would face about to fight, Romulus knelt down in the midst of his terrified soldiers, and lifting up his

hands to heaven, prayed "Father Jupiter" to defend and rally his people, now in extreme peril. Jupiter, it was believed, heard and granted his prayer; for the fugitives, struck with sudden reverence for their king, turned, re-formed their broken lines, and repulsed the advancing Sabines. But the daughters of the Sabines, who had previously been forcibly carried off from the Great Circus, rushed down from the Aventine between the opposing armies, with their infants in their arms, calling now on a Roman husband, now on a Sabine father or brother to desist, and so stayed the fight by their cries, lamentations, and entreaties. Peace was then concluded between the two nations, and Tatius, the Sabine king, offered sacrifices and joined in eternal friendship with Romulus—burying the wrongs done to the Sabine women in the foundations of the common Forum. Tarquinius Priscus erected spacious porticoes around it to screen and temper the halls from the sun and wind, and built shops for the foreign wares that came from Ostia, Antium, and Etruria: those shops for ever famous as the spot where perished the girl Virginia by her father's hand.

I endeavoured to rebuild the fallen walls of the Forum such as they afterwards appeared—a vast and noble enclosure—surrounded by many

ranges of marble columns, open arcades, and majestic porticoes, stretching away in long lines towards the Capitoline Mount. Between these stately colonnades rose a wall of division, hung, in the time of Cæsar, with splendid drapery, to shelter the togaed senators, tribunes, and patricians, who paced up and down on brilliant mosaic floors, or sat in judgment in the senate-house, or gave laws to the universe. Innumerable statues, modelled by the best sculptors of Greece and Rome, broke the lines of the pillars, while brilliant paintings decorated the internal walls, within whose ample enclosure rose three great basilicas—the Optima, the Æmilian, and the Julian, besides the Comitium, where the Curiae met. The rostra also stood within the Forum, containing the orator's pulpit, where Rome so often hung enchanted over the eloquence of Cicero; where Mark Antony fired the populace to revenge "great Cæsar's fall," the mutilated body lying on a bier exposed before him; where Caius Gracchus melted the hearts of his audience; and where Manlius sought to suspend the fatal sentence hanging over him as he pointed to the Capitol and bade his countrymen remember how his arm alone had sustained it. Close at hand was the tribunal where the magistrates sat on ivory chairs, whence came

the decree of Brutus condemning his own sons to die, and that other of Titus Manlius, who preferred his son's death at his tribunal rather than, living, know him disobedient to the consular power, then vested in himself—barbarous rigour, that afterwards wrought such grief and woe, when power and injustice went hand in hand in Rome! Near here grew the Ruminalis—that mysterious fig tree whose shade sheltered Romulus and Remus while the wolf suckled them. In the time of Augustus it was enclosed in a temple. The sanctuary of Vesta, with its roof of bronze, stood near the Comitium, circular in shape, chaste, and pure in design, where the sacred virgins, clad in long white vestments bordered with imperial purple, tended the sacred fire that burned under the image of the goddess, and guarded the Palladium—a golden shield, on whose preservation it was said Rome's existence depended. Behind the temple, at the foot of the Palatine, stretches a wood of evergreen oaks devoted to silence and repose, where the dark branches waved over the tombs of departed vestals, whose spirits it was believed passed at once to the delights of the Elysian Fields. Under the Palatine Hill, and near the shrine of Vesta, a pure fountain of freshest water broke into a magnificent marble basin close to

the portico of a temple dedicated to Castor and Pollux. It was said, and believed, that after the battle of Lake Regillus, the great twin brethren, mounted on snow-white horses and radiant in celestial beauty, suddenly appeared in the Forum, and announced to the anxious and expectant multitude the victory gained by their fellow-citizens over the Etruscans. At this fountain they stopped and refreshed their horses, and when asked whence they came and by what name men called them, they suddenly disappeared. So the Romans raised a temple to their honour by the spring where they had rested on mortal earth.

Where now the moon lights up a barren space, the Gulf of Curtius once yawned in the very midst of the Forum, to the horror and astonishment of the superstitious senators, who judged the omen so awful, that the anger of the gods could only be allayed by the sacrifice of what Rome deemed most precious—a bold and noble warrior, armed *cap-à-pie*, who flung himself headlong into the abyss.

Afterwards Domitian raised, as it were in derision, a colossal statue of himself over this spot hallowed by patriotic recollections. Beside it stands the single column of Phocas, once crowned by his gilded statue; while, to the right,

the massive pile of the triumphal Arch of Severus flings down black shadows on the marble stairs descending from the Capitol.

The Capitol, the heart of Rome, the sanctuary of the pagan world, stood forth in my fancy radiant and glorious, piled with glittering temples, superb porticoes, and lofty arches, the abodes of the gods on earth. Here, amidst statues, monuments, and columns, rose sumptuous fanes consecrated to Peace, to Vespasian, Jupiter-Feretrius, and Saturn; while, crowning the hill and overlooking the Forum, is the Tabularium, surrounded by long ranges of open porticoes, within whose walls hang recorded, on tables of brass, the treaties Rome concluded with friends or enemies.

Around is an open space called the Inter-montium, between the rising peaks of the hill, where grew a few shattered time-worn oaks, endeared to the plebs by the recollection that Romulus made this spot at all times the most sacred and inviolable asylum to those who sought the hospitality of his new city. All crimes, all treasons safely harboured here! To the right, high above the rest, uprose the awful temple of Jupiter Capitolinus, at once a fortress and a sanctuary—the most venerable and the most gorgeous pile that the imagination of man can conceive, adorned

with all that art could invent, and blazing with the plunder of the world. Here came the consuls to assume the military dress, and to offer sacrifices before proceeding to battle. Here, in special seasons of danger, the senate assembled before the statue of the god who presided, as it were, over the destinies of the people; here the tables of the law were displayed to the citizens, and the most splendid religious rites performed. The façade, turned towards the south and east, consisted of a gigantic portico supported by six ranges of columns; statues of gilt bronze alternated with the pillars, on which were suspended countless trophies of victory, magnificent shields and plates of gold, glittering arms won from barbarian enemies, together with swords, axes, and shields worn by generals who had returned victorious to Rome, and who had enjoyed the honours of a military triumph. Statues of gilt bronze were ranged along the roof, covered in with tiles of gilt brass, all save the cupola, which was open, disdaining any other roofing than that of the eternal heavens. Superb basso-relievi decorated the entablature and frieze, and vast colonnades of the most precious marbles extended on either side of the central temple, linking together two side porticoes of almost equal splendour. That

to the right was dedicated to Juno; that to the left to Minerva, the wife and daughter of the terrible god who sat enthroned within the gilded walls of the central sanctuary, crowned with a golden diadem, wearing a toga of purple, and holding in his hand the awful thunder destined to destroy the enemies of imperial Rome. Jupiter, "supremely great and good," had never, according to the Romans, condescended to inhabit any other earthly abode, and was particularly propitious when approached in his great temple on the Capitol, where his altars burned with perpetual incense spread by imperial hands, and generals, Cæsars, kings, and potentates came from the far ends of the earth to offer costly sacrifices and worship.

Beyond the Tabularium, on the opposite side of the hill, where the moon now lights up a mass of dingy walls, stood the citadel built on the Tarpeian Rock, its base once bathed by the waters of the Tiber. This fortress, conquered by the indignant Sabines and heroically defended by Manlius against the Gauls, is now no more. Not a vestige remains of it save only, in the museum of the Campidoglio, the "brazen images" of those patriotic geese that woke the echoes on that dark night so nearly fatal to the existence of Rome. A

temple dedicated to Juno Moneta was afterwards built on the foundations of the house of Manlius, where the archives of the city and the public treasury were preserved.

And what was this mighty city that I sought to disinter from the darkness of the past, and to rebuild, standing alone in the Forum under the moon's pale light? Within its precincts the dark ilex and cypress branches waved over altars, grottoes, and tombs, in thirty-two sacred groves. Fourteen aqueducts once linked Rome with the Alban and Sabine Hills, drawing large rivers and softly-gushing mountain-springs to feed its fountains, palaces, and circuses. From the golden milestone in the Forum distances were measured, and roads extended over the whole of the then known world—the Appian, the *regina viarum*, passing through Naples to Brindisi, the Flaminian, the Aurelian, the Latin, Æmilian, and Salarian Ways. Along those endless high roads, in sumptuous palaces, under countless porticoes, in temples and forums (of which Rome reckoned fourteen, each of surpassing magnificence), circuses, and baths, all monuments of the luxury, the power, and the civilisation of the mistress of the world, five millions of inhabitants circulated. Fifty-six public baths of unrivalled size and splendour

served as a promenade and recreation to this luxurious people. Two immense amphitheatres and two circuses, each accommodating nearly one hundred thousand spectators, amused their idle hours. Five vast lakes for naval combats, thirty-six marble arches of triumph, nineteen public libraries, forty-eight obelisks, and a universe of marble, bronze, and stone statues, peopled the city with an elegant and refined splendour.

Where now the desolate Campagna clasps the fallen city with a zone of sylvan beauty, buildings, streets, markets, temples, gardens, the environments of an immense city, once appeared. The fatal beauty of this district tells a tale of former splendour, even after centuries of ruin. Rome once extended to Otricoli (a day's journey distant), to Ostia (where the sea bore merchandise and riches to its shores), to Tivoli, and to Albano. Then came a cincture of enchanting villas, wealthy farms, and rich vineyards belonging to emperors and nobles, nestling in soft valleys, clothing the distant mountains with incredible fertility, and adorning even the remotest rural districts with monuments of rich and varied architecture.

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I have been much struck to-day with the pen-

sive, solitary beauty of the Villa Borghese, embosomed in its dark ilex woods, with a spreading pine here and there cutting the landscape, and giving a peculiar and classical character to the scene. The fountains breaking the long vistas through the woods have a charming effect, and are the only artificial feature in an essentially natural whole. Such views, too, towards Albano and Frascati, deepening with rich purple light, are never to be forgotten. The villa itself is a somewhat mean building for such extensive grounds, but rich in treasures of sculpture.

I was delighted with the Apollo and Daphne of Bernini, one of the most lovely statues I ever beheld. The transformation of Daphne is given with marvellous truth. She is already enclosed within the trunk, which seems to be mounting, as it were, momentarily to her breast. Her hair has already thickened into leaves; the fingers are sprouting with wonderful truth; and her toes have turned earthwards in tiny, delicate, rooty fibres and strings. There is, too, a certain air of desperate satisfaction in her countenance as she feels her escape from Apollo insured; and yet she is, as it were, still flying on the wings of the wind, though only half animate. Apollo is by no means to be compared with the nymph. There are many

other fine sculptures, but nothing impressed me like this.

Pauline Borghese, as the Venus Vincitrix, is too Frenchified and artificial for my taste, and looks unpardonably unclassical.

There is a melancholy grass-grown square behind the house, with fountains surrounded by double rows of ilex, very suggestive of malaria.

To-day, Sunday, the 13th November, I saw the process of making a saint in the nineteenth century, or speaking more correctly, raising a fresh aspirant to the celestial peerage—an edifying sight, truly! At three o'clock we went to St. Peter's, the road from the bridge of San Angelo being beset with cavalry, whose numbers increased as we approached nearer the church. The central space in front was crowded with all classes hurrying onwards up the great steps into the vast *sala* before them, where his Holiness that day "received;" for St. Peter's looks no more like a church than "I to Hercules."

So immense, however, is the edifice, that inside there appeared but a sprinkling of people, great as was the crowd. A fine mellowed light prevailed at the hour of the setting sun. The windows, too, had been partly covered with draperies that cast a rich tinge around.

Extending from the Chapel of the Sacrament towards the altar was a double file of soldiers, mixed with the grotesque Swiss guard stationed at intervals. It was an odd thing to see the military introduced fully armed in the very house of God, and argued a strange state of government, under which the Pope could not visit St. Peter's in safety without their protection: but so goes the world at Rome. After a due proportion of waiting, Pius IX. appeared, surrounded by his tonsured court, slowly advancing through the lines of military, who, presenting arms and falling on their knees, woke the deep echoes of the great building.

I stood close to the temporary altar of crimson velvet and gold where the Pope performed his devotions, and saw him admirably. He is a fat, benevolent, soft-looking man; his expression decidedly prepossessing, but at the same time essentially priestly. His hair is quite white, and he altogether looks older than I had expected. He was dressed principally in white, with a slight mixture of red. A priest, or page, held up his rather short petticoat behind and displayed his legs which looked absurd. The cardinals and monsignori in red, and the canonici in purple, also repeated their orisons. I thought them a

singularly vulgar-looking set. After his Holiness had said his prayer, he rose and proceeded to the altar behind the central *baldacchino*. The apsis or choir had been elaborately decorated, and presented a gorgeous *coup d'œil*. Hundreds of splendid glass candelabra were suspended from the top to the bottom of the walls; drapery covered all the intermediate space; while at certain distances large pictures represented the notable actions of the hero of the day. In the centre of the choir, immediately over St. Peter's chair, in a gigantic gold frame, was displayed his portrait, illuminated from behind. I have seen the Scala at Milan, and many other gorgeous opera-houses, but I never beheld one to compare with this, which resembled nothing else, however—the choir being the stage, and the Pope and cardinals the actors, with ourselves, the mighty mass of spectators, the audience.

As a spectacle, it was beyond words splendid. Millions of candles light up the space now dimmed by the falling day. After the Pope has proclaimed from the altar the name, style, and title of the new *beatificato*, which was duly recorded on parchment borne by his attendants, he slowly withdrew, casting blessings around as he passed along, which were received, I thought,

with tolerable indifference. A small book was thrust into my hand, purporting to be a life of the new saint, a curiosity of superstition, containing accounts of his supposed miracles, which I took the liberty not in the least to believe.

I then went to look at the statue of St. Peter (*alias* Jupiter), and scarcely recognised my worthy friend in his holiday garb: he was arrayed in robes of crimson cloth of gold, draped regally about his sable person. The tiara, with its triple crown sparkling with jewels, adorned his head, and a ring of enormous size appeared on his finger. Whether in this guise the image looked most hideous or ludicrous it would be hard to say, but a more grossly grotesque object I never beheld. If it is not image-worship for the people to kneel down and kiss his toe, and pray before him, I know not what is. It was a grievous, shameful sight, that grim idol, decked out like a frightful black doll, to be kissed and adored!

The view from the Capitol gives one in five minutes a clear idea of ancient Rome. As a view it is varied and beautiful, more picturesque than any other in the city. The seven hills, to common, ignorant souls like myself, are all myths; for hills there are none, except the Quirinal, Cœlian, and Pincian, with the little mound on which the

Capitol stands. But how many things one sees in Rome that are respectable only for their names! The Tarpeian Rock, for instance, is a very disappointing place, a mere garden on a shelf of hillside, from which one looks down into a mean little court surrounded by poor houses. I don't see why *this* spot is particularly to be fixed on more than any other portion of the rock on which the Capitol stands: the people of the garden of course are positive on the subject, as it brings the *quattrini*. Then the clamorous little beggars, and the steps down into the Piazza on the Capitol—how steep, dirty, and disagreeable!

All the world knows *the thing* in the Museum is the Dying Gladiator—a most wonderful statue indeed; the very life seems ebbing out of the marble—actually dying, and grieving over approaching death. It has more expression than the Apollo, that being a spiritualised statue of a god—this a mortal man, full of the passions and sufferings of humanity. A bust of Julian the Apostate struck me vastly, as bearing just the restless, cunning, unsympathetic countenance I should have fancied; yet with this cunning and restlessness is blended a strange look of dignity, for he, too, was a nephew of the great Flavian. There also is a horrid statue of the Infant Her-

cules, a swollen, puffy abortion, like an Indian Idol—in green bronze too!

An old beggar came limping in, although the custode would fain have excluded him; also a Roman *contadina*, who frankly confessed, "*Ma guardo e guardo, ma poi non vedo niente.*" She and her companion soon settled down in deep contemplation of a much mutilated bronze horse, excavated from some part of the city near where they lived, which pleased them far more than all the rest. They hung about the custode like bees around honey, and he made himself great in their ignorance.

There are some charming pictures on the opposite side of the building. Guercino's "Sibylla Persica" is here; also a splendid picture by him—the "Glorification of Santa Petronilla," warm, rich, and Venetian. Some wonderful works of Garofalo's too, an artist one can only know at Ferrara and Rome, who unites the grander colouring of the Venetian to the conception and drawing of the Tuscan school. The more I see of his works, the more I admire them. The Paul Veroneses are fine also, and placed so that they can be seen, which is an advantage wanting in some of his best works at Venice, where, from the bad light in the churches, they are nearly invisible.

The whole drive to San Paolo fuori le Mura is deeply interesting. After threading dozens of labyrinth-like streets, the road all at once emerges on the broad, majestic Tiber. (N. B. I am fresh from Florence and the Arno.) To the right stands the graceful little temple of Vesta, chased and refined in aspect, as her temple should be. Below is another ancient temple, that of Fortuna Virilis, which the guide-books extol, but which I could not help thinking heavy and clumsy. Then there is the Ponte Rotto, now a spruce iron bridge. Standing on this bridge, one sees to the right the island of the Tiber, with two ugly old Roman bridges, dear in the eyes of antiquarians, connecting it with the town on either side, which rises in domes and campaniles, and piles of quaint old buildings along the river-side. Beyond the temple of Vesta is the church of the Bocca della Verità, so called from an old masque of Pan with an open mouth, into which the fingers of any one suspected of falsehood were introduced, in the belief that the stone lips would close on them if the person lied. It was a temple dedicated to Ceres, and is now surmounted by a fine Gothic campanile in galleries. Behind, the scene is closed by a high hill backing all. A procession issued out of the church, with lighted tapers,

and a priest under a dirty umbrella, going to administer extreme unction to a dying person. Down dropped all the people on their knees. Among the crowd were some gentlemen, who took especial care to cleanse their nether garments afterwards with handkerchiefs.

A long, flat drive brought us to the church, which outside makes no particular show, standing as it does so badly; but, on entering, what words can describe my astonishment at its stupendous size and splendour? The marble columns of the nave, placed like those in Santa Maria Maggiore in the true basilica style, are surpassing in beauty, size, and proportion, melting into the distance most harmoniously. Over the apsis and tribune are superb mosaics, fresh and gorgeous, and exceeding in beauty even those of San Marco at Venice. The light, too, here falls on them so well. I say nothing of the marble, the Egyptian alabaster, and the malachite all round. One gets used to these material displays of magnificence. Under the altar has ever been the traditionary burial-place of St. Paul; but how his body can be here and at St. Peter's, and his head at the Lateran, I leave for Catholics to determine. A miracle, I presume, will settle the question. This convent is so dreadfully exposed to the influences

of malaria that the monks can only reside here for six months in the year. They had just returned when I went there.

As we returned to Rome we entered it by the fine old gate of San Paolo. There is a splendid old bit of wall too, with high ruined turrets, like an enchanter's castle,—to what age belonging I have no idea. I never volunteer any description of the Roman walls, although, as antiquarians are so uncertain about them, I might as well venture my opinion. The Pyramid of Caius Cestius close by is as ugly as any other pyramid.

CHAPTER IX.

The Portrait of the Cenci—The Ruins of the Palace of the Cæsars, and Sermon at the Coliseum—Rospigliosi Palace—Churches of the Trastevere and Corsini Palace—Solemn Benediction at San Gregorio—Colonna Palace, Gardens, and Ruins—The Conservatorio Rooms at the Capitol—Church of Ara Cœli—Villa Lodovisi.

NOT one of the innumerable copies gives any idea of the pensive, supplicating look of the Barberini Cenci, that sweetest and prettiest of all Guido's heads. She looks into one's face with an expression full of plaintive anxiety, as if excusing her dreadful crime, and imploring pity and love in a way that quite brings tears into one's eyes. The painting bears evidence of having been finished in haste, particularly the background, which gives it an additional air of reality. A portrait, said to be of her mother-in-law, hangs beside her—a hard, brazen-faced Italian dame, redolent of intrigue. Then there is Raphael's "Slave" close by; a charming picture, full of effect, but not of his usual effect—more like a Murillo or a Titian—the dress Eastern and pic-

turesque. *She* is a fair beauty, while by her side hangs the naked portrait of his own Fornarina, with a bracelet bearing his name on her bare arm—a bold, staring thing, with vicious eyes looking out of their corners at one—as a painting, infinitely inferior to that divine portrait of her in the Tribune at Florence, where the same face and form are transformed into a Juno of majesty and beauty. All these treasures are in one small whitewashed room. Indeed, the whole “gallery” is contained in two rooms. In the second are pretty things of Albano’s, representing Diana, &c.; but I grow weary of his affectation.

It is impossible to imagine such a confused mass of ruins as the so-called Palace of the Cæsars on the Palatine Hill. I felt disgusted with myself for not being able to make anything out until I saw that Eustace says it is impossible. Great shapeless walls, ugly and unpicturesque, with deep subterranean supports, in the way to underground passages and chambers, are all one sees after mounting a number of steps to a platform laid out as a market-garden. The view is alone worth the trouble, with the Coliseum close in front, and the Baths of Caracalla on the Aventine Hill opposite. Ruins in the midst of ruins, which, seen near, are but wretched skeletons, though impos-

ing at a certain distance. The way up to the Palace of the Cæsars is through a narrow door in a row of stables. Madame Besançon, the Florence milliner, was flaunting about the ruins with a party of young French *grisettes*.

Next day, the 4th of December, was beautiful. I went down to the Forum, and, entering the large gate on the right-hand side, under the Palatine (on the opposite side by which I had mounted yesterday), ascended by a fine double flight of steps to a balustraded terrace on a level with the Palace of the Cæsars; in fact, a portion of the same ruins. Ruins, ruins, nothing but ruins, of no shape or form, but absolutely fragments. Where stood the house of Tiberius (said to have been in this direction, but which he could have but little inhabited, never remaining long in Rome) is now a peaceful lettuce-garden, terminating on the brow of the hill in a pretty thicket of ilex, waving in the breeze like a crown of classical laurels. In the centre of the garden are the so-called Baths of Livia, a subterraneous apartment to which I descended by a flight of steps, which the guide lit with torches. There are two small lofty ante-rooms, and then the bath, a well-proportioned apartment of small dimensions, with slight remains of having been faced with marble

and ornamented with frescoes. The bath itself is only large enough for one person; the ceiling above is arched. No light, of course, comes from without, the whole being underground. I confess I felt the place stuffy and unpleasant, and was but little interested. I suppose I am wanting in archæological proclivities, for these antiquities simply bore me; so much so, indeed, that I did not even care to inspect the excavations more recently made by the Emperor of the French.

Afterwards I went to the Coliseum, it being Friday, to hear the usual sermon delivered there. In a rustic wooden pulpit, raised against the inner wall, stood a tonsured monk, dressed in brown, with a cord round his waist, who preached in Italian. Around him was grouped a numerous auditory. Beside the pulpit leant another monk, and below, several members of a *confraternità*, their faces completely covered, with only apertures for the eyes and mouth, dressed in light drab stuff. Up and down the central walk sauntered some English strangers. A group of Roman women, with their picturesque linen head-dresses and red petticoats, placed themselves in attitudes full of unaffected grace about the steps of the large crucifix in the centre. The preacher, in a fine sonorous voice, addressed himself directly to

the audience, discoursed of heaven and hell, and reminded them every word and action was recorded by the avenging angel, and that the Christ suspended by his side in the pulpit, on coming a second time, would judge, not pardon sinners. It was a scene for a painter. The sun shone brightly, and the blue sky peeped through the arches above.

In this vast amphitheatre, which had once rung with cries of "The Christians to the beasts!" that same Christ whom they adored is now proclaimed by the voice of a humble monk, while around lie the ruined temples of the gods with scarce one stone upon another! There was a great silence; no one spoke but in whispers, for every soul united in the universal, all-powerful feelings of the moment. Whatever might be the difference of creed, here was our common Lord, our common Saviour, our universal Judge!

To-day (December 10th) I visited the Rospigliosi Palace, situated within a large *cortile* on Monte Cavallo, planted with dwarf acacias. It is of immense size, more like a huge hospital than a private residence. The porter had great difficulty in preventing our paying a *bonâ-fide* visit to the princess in our earnestness to discover the *carte*

du pays; but at last we were set right, and, turning to the left, ascended a flight of steps leading into a small but beautiful and highly-cultivated garden, full of orange trees and delicious roses, and great heaps of mignonette. In the central room of the Casino, at the extremity of the garden, is the celebrated "Aurora," of which no copy can possibly render with justice the original. But why paint those exquisite masterpieces on ceilings, where one breaks one's neck looking up, and then never sees them properly after all? There is the same difficulty in the Sistine Chapel, where Michel Angelo's wonderful frescoes are comparatively lost from the position. Really it is barbarous. But here, the loveliness of the Hours who can tell?—loveliness for every taste—features in every mould of beauty. Not less lovely is the back of one delicious head with exquisitely fair braided hair blown by the winds, which seems to flutter as though one heard the whistling breeze sweeping high up among the great mountain clouds.

But really such an ugly *he* among such heaven-born *she's* is too bad. I must unconditionally quarrel with Phœbus, who has a most inexpressive face, something like a shaved woman! which I account for by the fact that Guido, from a con-

stant habit of painting women, could not adapt his soft pencil to the manly conceptions of a Titian or a Vandyke. Moreover, the hair of the god of day is so light that it might pass for grey. But away with criticism; it is an immortal work, and Aurora really does look so flying on the ambient air, one fancies each moment she will glide away and disappear like the bright vision of a rainbow. Her face is of a bold, decided cast, wanting the delicate loveliness of the attendant Hours—her action grand and majestic as she cleaves the air in her course with all the bearing of a goddess. Her saffron robe, rounded by the breeze, harmonises grandly with the golden clouds behind her, as though she too were clothed with no meaner garment than the gorgeous vapour. Still, one regrets that her figure should be so pressed against the edge of the picture, thus curtailing the effect that would have been insured by a greater height of background. The principal figure is thus, on a first glance, but a secondary object, and it is only after some moments, when time allows one to concentrate in some degree the admiring confusion of a first view into a steady gaze, that one contemplates her with sufficient attention. The bold shading of the horses is masterly; they actually appear as if rising from

the ceiling, so admirably are the bright lights thrown in.

The exquisite landscape under the clouds is not the least striking portion of the whole. There is a sea with white lateen sails dotted about here and there, bordered by mountains of the deepest Mediterranean blue. I could believe I was gazing on some lovely "bit" in the Corniche Road between Nice and Genoa, much diminished by distance, the colouring and outline are so to the very life. To the left comes a charming little touch of landscape, with dark outlying trees, suggestive of the deep mysteries of some pine forest. It reminded me a little of that most wonderful of all landscapes forming the background of Raphael's "Vision of Ezekiel" at Florence, breathing the very essence of that motionless, silent repose spread over all nature at mid-day, when dreams and visions arise in these burning latitudes. The room was crowded with copyists—vain labour to endeavour to reproduce forms and shades struck off in the happiest *furore* of genius when engaged in a task peculiarly sympathetic! Guido himself could never have copied that fresco, of which every touch was an inspiration.

There are some very interesting pictures in the adjoining rooms. In the left-hand room, some

fine heads by Rubens, who is always grand when he is not gross; and a curious portrait of Poussin, by himself, who, true even here to the deep green shades distinguishing his landscapes, has sacrificed his vanity in order to represent his face and person of the favourite tint, and appears, in consequence, a very livid, unearthly individual. Here, too, is Guido's famous "Andromeda," which, I confess, disappointed me, simply because the copies exactly resemble it; indeed, they are, barring the originality, quite as good. Her attitude is affected, like the Andromeda of a ballet; the sea is a vast mass, "without form and void;" and the monster is not nearly horrible enough for the occasion. The only one of the *dramatis personæ* I like is Perseus, who really is flying down from above in good earnest. The "Triumph of David," by Domenichino, tells a sad tale of the decline of art, being quite of "the silver age," as Gibson called it. I was vastly pleased with the "Death of Samson," by Caracci, in the opposite room—a grand picture, though deficient in colouring. The long arcade of the portico losing its pillared distance in the background—the prostrate figures in front howling, open-mouthed, in agony—the statue of the pagan god still erect and untouched by the falling columns—Samson himself, with up-

turned sightless eyes, sinking down overcome by his gigantic effort—beyond, and seen under the arches, the banquet where Delilah is seated, who raises her hands while the other Philistines rise in horror—brings the whole drama vividly before one. Indeed, the sensation is that of giddiness, for all about seems falling also along with that great portico.

High up and ill seen is one of the loveliest of Albano's pictures—"Diana and Endymion," gazing at each other from opposite sides of a river; beyond is a wood, an Italian wood, black and shady, while here and there, among the trees, bright silver lights appear like gleams of crystal. No earthly lights seem these, but rays from the goddess herself, playing around her ere she sinks to rest, and under her crescent symbol "sleeps with Endymion."

The Via Appia, or Street of Tombs, is one of the grandest sights in Rome—an appropriate and affecting approach to the gates of the fallen mistress of the world; like her, in absolute ruin, but majestic in decay. Much as I had read and seen of this approach, the solemn reality far exceeded my expectations. Extending in a straight line from the tomb of Cecilia Metella, the long vista of ruins stretches for miles over the desolate Campagna;

stones, towers, monuments, shapeless masses, lie piled on each side, forming an avenue of ruin impossible to conceive. Beneath is the original Roman pavement, and very bad and rough it is. Then there is such an enchanting view of Rome and its ancient walls, the aqueducts stretching across the plain for miles and miles beyond the Apennines, ending in Mount Soracte, shaded in every colour from purple to pale yellowish pink. In front lies Frascati, nestled in the folds of the mountains, and dotted with forests and villages; above is Albano; while around extends the long level line of the Campagna, that earthen Dead Sea—calm, immovable, interminable, and looking equally accursed.

Yesterday I made a tour in the Trastevere, lying beyond St. Peter's, under the Janiculum. It is not in the least like Rome, but has a peculiar, indescribable look of its own. The principal streets are long, broad, and straight, while some of the smaller and more distant quarters are dangerously solitary. High up to the right, on the top of a steep ascent, stands the church of San Onofrio, with its surrounding colonnade. There is a venerable yet romantic look about the place which is very pleasing, and the view of Rome from the terrace before the entrance is quite magnificent—

grander far than from the Capitol. I think imagination run wild could scarcely conjure up a more varied and magnificent panorama.

Beside the church is a solitary garden planted with solèmn old pine trees, where it is said Tasso, after his escape from Ferrara, loved to roam. At present it is remarkable as THE spot for viewing St. Peter's, standing below in all its vast proportions. The church of San Onofrio is in itself small and insignificant, save for its antiquated air. In the tribune are some lovely frescoes by Peruzzi. Most particularly beautiful is one in the centre, representing the Virgin and our Saviour enthroned. They are surrounded by a circle of deep blue clouds; her robe is of the same tint, also the mantle around the Christ, relieved below by the delicate pink of his other drapery. This deep blue is full of character, mysterious and grand. Above are frescoes by Pinturicchio—angels dancing and playing on instruments—all of surpassing grace; while above, under the form of an old man with outstretched arms, appears "The Eternal." Here, too, is a charming dewy Correggio, besides some other good frescoes. The tomb of Tasso is surmounted by a mean profile likeness in oils, set in a medallion—a miserable daub, which the friars themselves say is no likeness. This tomb is a

disgrace to Rome. In death as in life, Tasso seems fated to neglect and contumely, and whilst Ariosto and Dante boast the proudest monuments, he alone is left without a fitting memorial. The frescoes of Domenichino outside the church, under a colonnade, are faded and poor.

Santa Maria in Trastevere, a grand basilica⁸, stands in a piazza, with a piazza's usual accompaniment—a lovely fountain. There are some curious frescoes outside, of the twelfth century—the Virgin on her throne, with female saints on either side, crowned and bearing basins streaked with blood, marking them as having been martyrs. The interior is solemn and sombre, and of fine proportions, consisting of parallel rows of columns up the nave, great single blocks, with a high entablature above. There was an excessive air of devotion among the people present, who looked savagely at an intruder, while a sulky old sacristano would not give me any information—a rare thing in polite Italy.

The apsis is considerably raised, on steps; around are many curious old monuments; everything, indeed, looks as antique as if no one had touched the place since the time of its founder, Julius I., in 340. It is said to have been the first church where service was ever performed. Num-

bers of popes have restored and embellished it. Over the apsis are some fine mosaics—Christ and the Virgin enthroned, in the Romanesque style, which makes their relative position very remarkable; then there are popes, apostles, and prophets *à l'ordinaire*. Kugler says, "The release from the trammels of the Byzantine school is here apparent, and they may be considered the first purely Western work of a higher order produced by Italian art."

I call this a terrible church. It quite frightened me, it looked altogether so stern. I wouldn't sleep in it for the fortune of Torlonia. I am sure the martyrs walk about with their heads under their arms. There is an elegant chapel designed by Domenichino, with an angel on the ceiling which he has left unfinished. All that brings one face to face with these great masters in "their habit as they lived" is interesting.

Santa Maria dell' Orto is situated in an out-of-the-way corner, between high walls with palm trees and oranges peeping over—a very convenient place to be robbed in. I had immense difficulty in getting in, as the sacristano is deaf, and had gone aloft to wind the clock up. His daughter, a slatternly young damsel in slipshod shoes, called and screamed, "Papa, papa!" to

every note in the gamut, for a long time addressing only empty air. At last, when the clock was wound, down came the old man, and the door was opened. This is a beautiful church, quite a small St. Peter's, covered in the same style with the most precious marbles, and designed by Giulio Romano in admirable taste. One cannot say if it be large or small, so perfect are the proportions—quite a gem of architecture. It is called Dell' Orto from a miraculous picture behind the altar, found in a garden, the spot being marked by a stone, with an inscription, in the centre of the church. How strange to find such a shrine hid in an obscure forsaken corner—the cloisters, too, occupied as a manufactory of tobacco!

I next drove to Santa Cecilia, built on what *was* the house of that interesting personage; standing back from the street, in a large *cortile*—a low, quaint old building, something like a barn decorated with columns. Her life, under Catholic handling, has become a pretty legend. In extreme youth she was converted to Christianity, but, notwithstanding, was forced to marry a pagan. A vow of chastity prevented her consenting to live with him as a wife, which her husband much resented showing his displeasure by conduct marked by savage bru-

tality. But her sweetness and resignation overcame him, and he learnt to respect without understanding her. At this period he was visited with a dream. He imagined he was in heaven, where his hands were joined to those of his wife by angels, who crowned them both with roses and lilies. His brother Tiberius, entering his apartment soon after, asked from whence came the delicious odour of flowers he perceived. So great an impression was made on them both by this circumstance, added to Cecilia's entreaties, that they became Christians.

The prefect of Rome soon discovered their altered sentiments, condemned St. Cecilia to be stifled in her bath, and her husband and brother-in-law to be decapitated. In a side chapel is shown the identical bath where she was condemned to suffer martyrdom. It has evidently been an ancient bath-room, and is exceedingly curious. There are still the remains of the leaden pipes, and the spaces and holes round the walls for the evaporation of the steam. This dates back as early as A.D. 230, she having been among the early martyrs.

But the beauty of beauties is her monument under the high-altar, sculptured by Maderno, an

artist who assisted Bernini in his additions to San Pietro. The saint is lying as in an open coffin, precisely as her remains were found when, after miraculously escaping death by suffocation, she was beheaded. The face is turned away, giving a sweet curve to the neck, a little band encircling it so as to conceal the severance; the body, delicately small and fragile; the pretty feet—bare—all, as it were, twisted into a strange form, as if flung negligently into the grave. The body is covered with grave-clothes, save only the head and neck; the former is wrapped round with a cloth. To give an idea of the affecting and exquisite beauty, the *deadness* of the whole figure, is impossible. I could have gazed upon it for hours.

St. Cecilia, as patroness of music, is all-glorious in Raphael's divine picture at Bologna—young, fresh, glowing, her face upturned with an inspired look, while in her hands are the keys of an organ: a most sweet saint.

Nuns inhabit the convent opening from the church. They live under the strictest rules. They *never* are to be seen, but fly from gazers, and sing in a gallery surrounding the church behind a gilded screen. Many of them (the female custode said) are young and beautiful.

I could not conclude my tour in the Trastevere

without a visit to a magnificent edifice, the Corsini Palace, whose only fault is its situation. Still, such a building lends dignity even to a suburb.

The carriage enters a double *cortile* surrounded by pillars, open on one side to the garden, ascending the steep side of the Janiculum, which rises abruptly behind. One is deposited at the foot of the great staircase, which, after the first flight, divides majestically, and so mounts to the upper story, producing a noble effect. On the first-floor is the gallery, entered through a fine large hall, where the different doorways are screened with the Corsini arms, richly embroidered on red velvet. The gallery is immense, consisting of at least ten large rooms filled with pictures; but, on the whole, not an interesting collection. There is a great deal of trash, and too little variety; especially an over-abundance of enamelled, affected Carlo Dolces and *maniéré* Carlo Marattas—the latter especially, all as like “as two peas,” for one sees his wife’s face in every picture, always turned the same way, and with the same head-drapery. Both these painters belong to the second or silver age in painting, after the pure gold of Raphael, Titian, and the elder masters had been exhausted. There is one fine dewy Carlo Dolce—a Virgin and Child, much superior to many

other of his works here. The Corsini appear to revel in a perfect indigestion of Carlo Dolces, for the gallery of their Florence place is also full of his pictures. There is his celebrated "Head of Poetry," which, truth to say, looks ill, thin, and languid, to my mind, afflicted also with rather weak eyes.

But to return: here are some fine Guercinos, specially a head of Christ crowned with thorns—*horribly* beautiful—some bluish Caraccis, and some pale, inexpressive Guidos. Strange that an artist who *could* paint so divinely should condescend to produce such meagre shadows as these. Never did genius display a greater inequality. Among a multitude of uninteresting and feeble landscapes are some interesting ones by Poussin and Salvator Rosa. A number, too, of Dutch pictures are here—Boths, Berghems, &c. But I hate this low-life school at all times, and most of all in dear, romantic, poetic Italy, where such a style is an abomination. There is a fine portrait of Philip II., our bloody Mary's pale, lean tyrant, by Titian, and others of great interest and immense value as paintings by Albert Durer, Vandyke, Rubens, &c. Two pictures by the latter are especially fine, showing how well he *could* paint when not indulging in exaggeration

and coarseness. Luther and his wife are curious as portraits. She is hideous, which makes his marriage all the more pardonable, as he never, most assuredly, induced her to break her vows for the sake of her beauty. Luther is a fat, jolly friar, with a double chin, a vulgar face, and stupid expression.

The so-called gem of the collection is a Murillo—a very ugly Virgin (more than commonly homely and uninteresting *even* for him) sitting with the Infant Saviour against a sun-baked wall. The colouring is superb, but the subject—the lay figure—atrocious.

What kings and princes are these Corsini, to possess two such palaces, one darkening the Lung Arno at Florence, with a superb gallery of paintings also; and this overgrown, monstrously fine place at Rome, with dozens of splendid villas in Tuscany and Romagna to boot!

The other day I went to the church of St. Gregory the Great, to see a certain abbot-elect of some place in England solemnly blessed by Cardinal A——; a grand affair, to which one was admitted by printed invitations, as if it had been a ball.

The morning of the ceremony was one of the very worst of the year—a pouring rain, such as

Rome only can boast—rivers ran down the streets, and water-spouts poured from the heavens. The church of St. Gregory, beyond the Coliseum, is situated in the worst part of the city in point of roads. The carriage sank down in the soft mud, and the horses scrambled over the ancient Roman way under the arch of Titus, as if they intended to lose their legs and deposit us there in the shape of modern ruins. Despite the weather, however, a number of carriages were already assembled at the foot of the handsome flight of steps on which stands the church, in a quiet, sequestered corner near some public gardens, whose groves afford a pleasant shade in a fine day, and enliven a somewhat gloomy position. It is not a large building, and I was disappointed to find the interior entirely modernised. Monsignore T—— received us near the door, and placed us in an excellent position close by the altar. Cardinal A—— soon advanced within the rails, and the organ pealed forth. The robed priests were all at the altar, and such a rustling of silks, and satins, and embroideries—such a display of lace and fine linen never could have been conceived out of a milliner's shop. The abbot-elect undressed until one became positively alarmed at the probable consequences, and I irreverently

thought of the clown at Astley's; but, as in the case of that personage, the contingency had been duly provided against; and, much as was taken off, still more remained behind. The poor man must have narrowly escaped suffocation in his original state. As to the cardinal, he peeled repeatedly in the course of the morning, and underwent the most marvellous transformations. He began in black, changed into red, and finally came out very splendid in purple. How all this was managed I cannot say; I can only vouch for the fact. He looked remarkably well in the last dress, with a scarlet cap—like an old Venetian picture by Tintoretto; and nothing could be more dignified and appropriate than his appearance as he sat enthroned in a great gilt arm-chair, under the temporary canopy of crimson velvet erected for him. One fat Benedictine monk in attendance on him nearly underwent strangulation in the process of dressing. He could not get into his clothes on any terms, and performed agonising gymnastics, which caused him to look very red in the face all the morning afterwards. Then others could not find the strings to tie on their vestments, and left them hanging down behind on the black *sottane* like untidy schoolboys. Altogether there was no end of confusion.

I never was present at so wearisome a ceremony. It lasted *five* entire hours. I never saw, even in Rome, such walking about, and such extra bowing, and the same things done over and over again, as if for a penance—and a real penance it was in good truth to me, heretic as I am!

The abbot-elect paraded backwards and forwards within the rails and without the rails twenty times, and put his mitre on and took it off until I actually got giddy. There was a regular ecclesiastical prompter, or master of the ceremonies, who kept everybody in order, making the funniest little nods and subdued gestures, like a well-behaved Neapolitan, as he marshalled them when to sit and when to stand, and if the eternal mitre was or was not to be worn. The abbot-elect (poor man, how I pitied him!) lay flat and prostrate on the steps of the altar for nearly an hour, while the seven penitential psalms were chanted over him. When he got up he looked as if he had but just escaped apoplexy. It was an immense relief when all this tiresome ceremonial was over.

The Palazzo Colonna, like a true Roman house, looks nothing at all from the street; indeed, I am pretty sure that a row of shops are erected in front—stables there are certainly, and a church

pushed violently up into one corner. Over this odd medley of buildings are fixed the *stemma* or armorial bearings of the great Colonna. On entering a vast *cortile* the enormous size of the palazzo appears; still, all jumbled together, and without any regular façade, masses of wall run in all directions, and open into inner courts and all sorts of wonderful places, covering an immense space of ground. Half of the *piano-nobile*, or first-floor, is occupied by the French Embassy; the other half is dedicated to the family and their pictures; and, as both these suites are respectively the finest in Rome, the extent of the whole palace may be imagined. Below, on the ground-floor, was the studio of that charming painter, the Professore Minardi, as well as a military barrack; above, *al secondo*, are the private apartments of the Colonna family; so altogether it is much like a Noah's ark in point of variety. Between the French ambassador and the picture-gallery one common stair is used, leading into a general ante-room of great size, where the numerous doors are all alike covered with tapestry, so that it would be a very pardonable mistake if one walked direct into the presence of the Frenchman. Chance, however, directed my steps aright. The first two rooms are hung with old tapestry;

then begin the pictures, of which there is a most pleasing, but not an extensive, collection. In the first room are two landscapes by Albano, remarkable rather for size than beauty; and a Holy Family, by Giulio Romano, where the rich colouring recalls the Venetian school, while the admirable grouping reminds one of the disciple and admirer of Raphael. Here, too, is a beautiful Paul Veronese, bright, living, glowing. Portraits there are by Titian and Tintoretto, and Heaven only knows how many more. But who can tarry in these chambers with that glorious *sala* beyond, the finest room in all Rome, brilliant with frescoes, paintings, mirrors, chandeliers, statues, marbles, ivory, and gilding, all blending in one great glowing whole, charming and astonishing the bewildered gaze? It was built by one of the family, a great general, who, after a victory gained for the Venetians, as if the palace were not already immense enough, added this sumptuous gallery.

Truly these Italian nobles are lodged like kings of the earth. Palatial architecture cannot be conceived out of Italy. I remembered the words of Gibbon as my eye swept down the gorgeous space, when speaking of the family residences of the Roman princes "as the most costly monuments of

elegance and servitude; the perfect arts of architecture, painting, and sculpture having been prostituted in their service, and their galleries and gardens decorated with the most precious works of antiquity which taste and vanity have prompted them to collect." To be sure, this regal pile was raised by Pope Martin V., who, with a proper portion of that family pride for which popes are famous, wished to commemorate his reign by erecting a palatial residence; for those were days when popes were vastly pushed about and irreverently elbowed, and kept on the trot from Avignon to Rome, with an occasional flight into Spain, by way of change. Martin did, however, remain quietly in the Eternal City after the Council of Constance, and lived to finish this prize palace.

The gallery is more than two hundred and twenty feet long, terminating at the further end in a sort of tribune supported by vast columns, and raised on steps. Within this holy of holies, in aristocratic exclusiveness, are two beautiful Venuses by Bronzino, whom the extreme delicacy of the present prince has caused to be draped with an ill-assorted garment painted in water-colours, and therefore removable. This dressmaking spoils two fine pictures entirely. It would

take pages to enumerate half the pictures and sculptures in this gallery. One fine portrait of the poetess Vittoria Colonna is very interesting; and another by Vandyke, of some family hero on horseback, striking and noble. As to the statues, I am grown difficult after the Vatican and the Capitol, and did not look at them. *The* thing is the superb gallery itself, the *ensemble* intoxicating the eye by a perfect harmony of colour, luxury, size, and grandeur. One of the marble steps is broken by a cannon-ball that penetrated the wall at the time of the revolution and siege. Prince Colonna has never allowed it to be repaired, and so it stands as a *memento mori*. From a window at the end of the gallery I entered the gardens which occupy the site of the baths of Constantine, on the steep ascent of the Quirinal, and the spot where those splendid horses were dug up that now ornament the beautiful fountain opposite the Pope's summer palace. Very picturesque gardens they are, ascending by double flights of steps through alleys of box and bay, along the margin of trickling streams and gushing fountains, to the hill above, where, from a grand terrace, one looks over Rome.

On this terrace are some gigantic fragments and capitals, said to have formed part of a Temple of the Sun erected by the Emperor Aurelian. Near

by, and looking down a place much like the bottomless pit, are some curious remains of baths, now used as a granary, but, like all other classical ruins, vague and indefinite. I poked my head down through an aperture into a deep vault of arched caverns, and I said, "Very curious!" "Dear me, how wonderful!" without a notion why, or understanding in the least what I was looking at.

Behind the terrace is a garden, not quite so ill kept as are Italian parterres in general. Great orange trees, loaded with fresh fruit, flung back the rays of the setting sun opposite, making one happy by the notion of having suddenly leaped into summer; for in these secluded nooks, embosomed in ilex and bay, within great orchards of the orange and the lemon, not a vestige reminds one of the course of these seasons, and a perennial summer reigns. We passed down a long covered *berceau*, and out through an iron gate opening on the Quirinal Hill opposite the Rospigliosi Palace, and near the beautiful fountain that crests the steep ascent of Monte Cavallo, opposite the Pope's palace. Here Castor and Pollux, in semblance of eternal youth and beauty, rein back their fiery steeds, whilst the lofty fountain rises between, sparkling, splashing, and shedding diamond drops around.

To-day I saw the apartments in the Capitol, called the Conservatorio—a noble suite on the first-floor. They struck like a well, and even my Italian companion complained of the cold. The first two or three rooms are finely painted in fresco, the subjects chosen from Roman history. But in a certain corner chamber are collected the precious relics of the city—objects, perhaps, of greater interest than any others in the world. On a pedestal stands the bronze wolf with the infants Romulus and Remus. Pictures have made this group familiar in the furthest corner of the world, but the original is no less striking. To see the very bronze taken from the Forum, where it was *venerated* as the *genius* of Rome, and to see also the rent in the hinder leg made by the lightning which fell when Cæsar was murdered, is indeed a leap back into bygone centuries, and to feel individualised with their most famous legends. Opposite is a bronze bust of Junius Brutus, with the eyes painted, giving it a curious sinister expression. This had every appearance of an antique head, and of being a strong likeness. To what disputes have this head and the wolf given rise! What volumes have been written *per* and *contra* their originality! For my part, I delight in a most believing spirit, and to receive with faith all the custode tells me. Here,

too, are the bronze geese, with open, quacking bills—images of those that saved the city of the Cæsars. They were dug out, it is said, at the foot of the Tarpeian Rock. Here, also, are the *Fasti Consulares*, containing lists of all the consuls from the time of Augustus—mutilated, broken, and obscure, yet the only authentic guide that history possesses. Here is also a wonderful head of Medusa by Bernini, fine enough to take the second place in poetic horror after Leonardo's tremendous painting of her at Florence.

Nothing in Rome carried me more back to my early imaginations than the relics collected in these rooms. Here I realised Rome. Fabulous story and far-off history seemed, as it were, within my grasp; the great shadows of antiquity were resuscitated at my individual call.

Afterwards I went to the church of the Ara Cœli, close by, up that long flight of one hundred and twenty-four marble steps overtopping the Capitol, the site of the Temple of Jupiter Feretrius, to see the Santo Bambino. As I was in the company of a devout Catholic, I put on my gravest face—which, however, I found it a hard matter to maintain. We were ushered into a side chapel off the sacristia, where, after waiting some time,

one of the monks appeared. We intimated our wish to be presented, whereupon he straightway proceeded to light four candles on the altar, and to unlock the front panel, out of which he took a large gilt box. The box was covered with common, wearable-looking baby-clothes, which he put on one side. He then placed it on the altar, and unfastened the lid; several layers of white silk, edged with gold, were then removed, and at last appeared the Bambino, in the shape of an ugly painted doll, some two feet in length. A more complete little monster I never beheld—the face painted a violent red; the hair, also wooden, in rigid curls; altogether very like one of the acting troop in Punch's theatre. There was a gold and jewelled crown on its head, and the body—swathed in white silk, like an Italian baby—was covered with diamonds, emeralds, and pearls, but of no great size or value; the little feet were hollow, and of gold. Of all sights in the world, the Bambino *ought* to be the most humiliating to a Catholic. The monk said the Bambino was of *cinque-cento* workmanship, which they always do say, *faute de mieux*, and added, with a devout look, "*Ma e molto prodigioso.*" When he goes to the sick, he rides in a coach sent for him, and is held up at the window to be adored. At Christ-

mas there are no end of ceremonies, in which he takes a prominent part; first, the *presepio*. But he is very great indeed at the Epiphany, when he is paraded up and down the church, escorted by bands of splendid military music, playing polkas, and then held up at the great door facing the hundred and twenty-four steps, on which the people kneel and worship him!

The church of Ara Coeli is immortalised by Gibbon as the place where he first dreamed his future history. It was designed by Michel Angelo, and is to my mind one of the many *fiascos* committed by that extraordinary man. At Christmas time the Presepio is exhibited in one of the side chapels, and is much visited, as being the best in Rome. A species of theatre is formed, raised to the level of the altar, on which appear full-sized figures of Joseph and Mary; the latter holding in her arms the Bambino, wearing its diamond crown, and glittering with gold offerings and jewels. Before them are prostrated the shepherds, their sheep reposing near; in the recesses of the grotto-stable appear the oxen feeding in their stalls; while above, in a glory, heaven opens, and the Almighty, surrounded by the celestial host, gazes down upon the touching scene. As the representation is extremely graceful, and the

figures are artistically correct in drapery and expression, I must confess that I viewed with pleasure a sacred picture recalling the humiliation and love of our Lord, thus visibly brought home to the senses. By Catholics it is contemplated with unquestioning and unaffected reverence and gratitude. They adore the Saviour in the symbolic image, and earnest prayers, long looks of love, heaving sighs, and tearful eyes, evidence the intensity of their feelings. The Presepio is not shown until the falling day permits of an artificial light. When the body of the church is in deep gloom, this one bright, happy, genial spot shines out, shedding floods of typical and positive light around. After about an hour a Franciscan monk appears on the stage, blows out the lights, and lets down a curtain, terminating the exhibition in a most primitive manner.

Opposite this stage, for ten successive days after Christmas, little children, previously instructed by the monks, mount on a kind of wooden pulpit, erected beside a column, and pronounce a discourse, or sermon, on the subject of the divine Saviour's lowly birth and humble infant years. Some of the children (all of whom are very young) perform their part admirably, and are full of fire and animation. They gesticulate with an energy,

and scream with a vigour of lungs, quite Italian, as they stand opposite the mildly-illuminated Presepio, and point with their tiny fingers towards the image of Him through whom they, as well as ourselves, can alone find redemption.

The gardens of the Villa Lodovisi are decidedly the most beautiful in the vicinity of Rome, situated at the back of the Pincian Hill, close under the walls, and not far from the Villa Albani. On entering, I was astonished at its vast extent; for, in good truth, it is a large park gardenised, affording every variety of shrubbery, parterre, wood, avenue walks, shady dells, and open spaces, *à l'Anglaise*, planted with trees; all overshadowed by the huge frowning city walls heavy with the weight of centuries, indented and arched, with here and there an old tower looming in the background above the lofty trees. On entering, we passed along a lordly gravel walk bordered by a thoroughly Italian clipped hedge, from which other walks, bordered by other hedges, all seemingly interminable, opened out in every direction, forming charming vistas, and ending in richly-tinted old ramparts, or in some classic temple, or tomb, or statue. The only things wanting were fountains, of which, strange to say, near this city of living waters, there were none to be seen.

The other side of the broad walk was laid out in elegant flower-parterres.

It was quite a Watteau scene, and I expected every moment to see a party of ladies emerge from behind the high hedges, all rouged, and be-hooped, and bedizened, attended by flights of beaux radiant in powder and pearl white, with rapiers by their sides, enamelled snuff-boxes, fans, or *bonbonnières* in their hands, like a frohtispiece to one of Molière's comedies; but no such "*précieuses ridicules*" appeared. There was the scene, the background; but the *dramatis personæ* were all in their graves, and their finery, as well as themselves, kindred dust, far away on the other side of the Alps.

When we reached the end of this approach, there appeared a little hill, which I ascended through pretty trimmed walks, to a charming kiosk at the summit, garlanded with creepers, and hemmed round with variegated aloes, their fat leaves turned down towards the ground. It was for all the world like a drop-scene in a play—only we, miserable sinners, spoilt the delusion by our modern dresses. Beyond was a noble view of modern Rome; for what view of the imperial city is not noble? At our feet bubbled a small stream into a great shell.

From the kiosk we descended into a dark ilex wood covering the further side of the rising ground. Here were ancient trees, old enough to have bent under the same hurricane that marked the hour of Cæsar's murder and clave the bronze wolf on the Capitol. In a dell at the bottom was a tiny lake, surrounding a moss-covered pile of ruined marble, radiantly green, from whence sprang up a liquid jet whose gurgling broke the silence and answered to the breeze rustling overhead. In an open space over this sweet dell, the casino (*Anglicè*, villa) appeared, whither the Princess Piombino repairs when she makes her *villeggiatura* and wishes to enjoy the beauties of nature, which the Italians have no notion of, not in the very least appreciating its beauties. The ladies especially, who never go out until the fall of the day, whatever be the season, care as little about this enchanting land, and the flowers, and the fragrant shade, and the delicious breezes, as a Venetian cares for a horse. They never walk, never wander about as we English delight to do, but order their carriage, and where that carriage cannot take them they never go. The casino is rather an ugly building, without the slightest pretension to anything except comfort. Within the inner hall are the famous frescoes of Guercino; his

"Aurora," and the "Night and Morning." The "Aurora" is, alas! but a milkmaid after Guido's goddess, and the black and brown piebalds but Flemish dray-horses in comparison with those ethereal steeds that skim through the azure main on the ceiling of the Rospigliosi saloons. However, it is a fine work, and has great force and justness of colouring. The various figures, too, emblematic of night, disappearing in different discomfited attitudes behind dark lowering clouds, all flying at the approach of day, are beautifully conceived. On either side of the hall are the figures of Night and Morning, both too well known to need more than a casual mention. I admire them much. The dead, heavy sleep of the one, whose eyes are closed over a manuscript she holds in her hand, while the owl, the night birds, and the sleeping child all tell of repose around her, contrasts capitally with the joyous, merry freshness of Day spreading his wings to the morning beams with a soul-inspiring glee, full of youth, hope, and promise. Other frescoes there are, landscapes of Domenichino and Guercino, no way remarkable except for the excessive greenness of the former's colouring—a defect I had already noted.

The house is a centre from which innumer-

able walks radiate through the delicious groves around. Before it wave great trees of cypress, tall and funereal as fancy can desire, mixed with immense solemn pines, whose twisted, knotted branches spread out in strange agonised shapes from the lofty trunks. High hedges border all the walks, lending a mysterious air to the grounds, suggestive of romantic meetings, and escapes, and assignations. Such hedges as these, tell-tale, hollow, and treacherous, must have divided Louis Quatorze from the still innocent La Vallière, when overhearing her confession of love and admiration in the gardens of Fontainebleau.

One walk there was under an avenue of ilex trees, forming a sombre shade, through which a stray sunbeam came struggling in as if by chance. Beyond was grass, over which the great boughs feathered down. On the other side the great *Muro torto* bounded the view. This walk was, I should think, two miles long, diversified by temples and statues at intervals. We followed it to a part of the grounds bordered by houses for preserving orange trees in winter, where the city wall had been utilised. The walls of ancient Rome and a modern conservatory!

"Imperial Cæsar, dead and turned to clay,
Might stop a hole to keep the wind away!"

Time would fail me if I told all the wonders of this enchanted garden, beautiful as the "delectable country" in "Pilgrim's Progress."

Two or three large casini in the grounds we did not see at all. But we were allowed to enter the sculpture-gallery, where I saw an immense deal of modern restoration, and very little original antiquity. Some of the statues are interesting, but not many. One, which I took for Virginius in the act of sacrificing his daughter, whom he holds by one hand, proved to be a Gaul slaying no one knows whom, and so I lost my interest, particularly as the figure is altogether modern. Here is a good Bernini, "Plutus carrying off Proserpine," only she fights too much *de bonne foi* to be graceful, and he looks too satyr-like to be interesting. Still there is great power in it; and I recognised the same master-hand that called the "Daphne and Apollo" into life. There are some curious old Termini, almost the only originals in the collection.

On the whole I never spent a pleasanter day than at the Villa Lodovisi, wandering in its lovely groves.

CHAPTER X.

Audience of the Pope—Villa Doria Pamfili.

I AM just returned from an audience of the Pope, and sit down to write with all my impressions fresh on my mind. Two days ago a Papal dragoon made his appearance at my door very early in the morning, before I was up, to the infinite alarm of my Italian maid, who thought he had come to arrest me. He only bore, however, a very peaceable intimation printed on an extra large sheet of paper, notifying that I was to make my appearance at the Vatican, dressed in black, on the following Sunday at three o'clock.

Sunday came, and with it, in the morning, our English service, whereat seven hundred "*heretics*" offer up their prayers in every variety of fashionable silks and satins, with unmistakable Parisian bonnets *en suite*. The walls of the "upper chamber" appropriated by the "Protesters" of the nineteenth century are painted in a style apparently for making it look as little like a

church as possible. Everybody stares with that insolent knock-me-down air considered indicative of high *ton* by English *alone*, the manners of all other nations increasing in courtesy precisely in proportion to the rank of the individual. In good sooth, we are fearfully and wonderfully made, especially on the Continent.

By three o'clock I had dressed myself *selon les règles* for presentation to the head of the rival establishment, viz., in black, with a veil over my head *à l'Espagnole*—a very becoming *coiffure* by the way, which must, I think, have been introduced by Lucrezia Borgia or some other ecclesiastical belle, as being the prettiest and most taking costume her fertile imagination could devise. Up we drove to St. Peter's, where those glorious fountains shoot up in masses of molten silver towards the bright sun, typical, in their transparent purity, of the faith which martyrs on that very spot have sealed with their blood. I was afraid I was late, and so hurried along the marble corridor and up the regal staircase which extends from the colonnades to the interior of the Vatican. The quaint Swiss guard were lounging about and talking some utterly unintelligible *patois*. These men are regular "*bestie*," as the Italians say, and cannot be classed under any denomina-

tion of Christians; they have scarcely the attributes of humanity, and only understand *la raison de la force*, being gifted with particularly sharp elbows, as every one who has ever been jammed into a church crowd in St. Peter's or the Sistine Chapel knows to his cost. At the top of the steps stood a servant in crimson livery; a little farther on, another. All things have an end—so at last had the climbing up-stairs. I found myself landed in the first room of the picture-gallery, where San Romualdo and his companions are represented as ascending still farther *en route* to heaven in voluminous white dresses. Here I was kept waiting at least an hour, and so had abundant time to observe the crowd of ladies and ecclesiastics amongst whom I found myself. There was a group unmistakably French—two ladies as coquettishly dressed as black would allow, with veils which displayed rather than hid their faces. With them were two gentlemen, who fidgeted incessantly, used their handkerchiefs like minute-guns, and took snuff by handfuls. The ladies rattled away incessantly, like true Frenchwomen. Bless their souls, how they must talk in their sleep! Next to them was a party as decidedly English; they laughed and nudged each other, and made fun of everything, were very ill dressed, and

seemed utterly out of place. Then came a whole circle of French again, with two abbés and a small round boy, coloured in the face like a rosy pippin. These people had brought some excellent jokes along with them, and laughed so long and loud, the walls must have been scandalized, the priests heartily joining in the fun. Certainly the vicinity of the Holy Father had no effect upon them, nor were they sobered by the presence of two nuns or pilgrims who sat motionless beside them. These were two young creatures of most interesting appearance, with white cloths wrapped closely round their faces, precisely as the early masters, Perugino and his predecessors, represent the Mater Dolorosa. They wore dresses of dark brown stuff, with girdles of coarse knotted rope; crosses suspended round their necks, and coarse sandals binding their naked feet; in their hands they held broad-brimmed straw hats. I understood that they were destined to some mission in North Africa! Poor things! what devotion such a life requires! Immovable they sat, like monumental effigies, and as the deep shadows fell on the delicate face of the younger of the two, and a slight hectic colour flushed her ivory cheek, she looked like some pre-Raphaelite saint listening to the preaching of an Augustine or an Ambrose! I

wonder what they thought of the world and its vanities in the person of the French lady, flourishing an embroidered pocket-handkerchief and rattling her jewellery.

Dr. Johnson says, "An hour may be tedious, but never can be long"—a proposition I utterly controvert, for I found that division of time allotted to waiting exceedingly lengthy. I grew so cold and chilled, I felt actually turning into stone. When, however, hope seemed quite vain, and after even the pilgrim nuns had moved the quintessential part of an inch, steps were heard approaching; the curtain over the door was drawn aside, and the Pope's private chaplain, Monsignore A——, advanced into the room bareheaded, magnificently attired in light purple robes, with a great cross embroidered on his breast. Making a general bow to the assembled company, who rose at his entrance, he pronounced my "*rispettato nome*," as the Italians have it, and I made my exit through two or three empty rooms. Before entering the audience-gallery, called Degli Arazzi, from the glorious tapestries that hang along the walls, designed by Raphael, Monsignore A—— instructed me how to behave, and made me take off my gloves, which are never worn in the presence of Papal royalty. Beside the door stood another

valet in crimson. A bell rang, and I was told to advance. Pius stood at the top of a long gallery. On entering I knelt; on advancing to the middle of the room I knelt again; and at last, on arriving before him, a third time I knelt. All this is difficult to execute decorously. The aspect of the Pope is extremely benignant and pleasing; a halo of kindness and benevolence hovers around him, and the sweet smile on his calm, composed features immediately prepossesses one towards him. As I made the allotted genuflexions he seemed to wave his hand as though deprecating the formality, and bidding me freely advance. He looked almost pained at being approached so ceremoniously. On reaching his feet, at the third genuflexion, he presented me his bare hand, and I kissed a splendid ruby ring which he wears. Gregory, the late Pope, desired and submitted to having his foot kissed, the orthodox salutation at Papal audiences; but the amiable Pius prevents even such an attempt by frankly stretching forth his hand at once. He was dressed entirely in white, with a small cap on his head, and shoes of red, bearing a cross embroidered in gold, and stood beside a table at the top of the room. His white robes hanging in heavy folds around him, the tapestried walls of the gallery, his grave and

immovable attitude, one hand resting on the table, altogether conveyed the idea of an historical picture more than an actual scene. He addressed various questions to me respecting my own family affairs, and listened with interest to my replies, first asking me in which language, French or Italian, I could most easily express myself. His voice is soft and musical, as all know who have heard how sweetly he chants the high mass at St. Peter's; and his manner is full of paternal kindness and affability. "*Nella gioventù,*" said he, "*c'è sempre vanità; le tribolazioni vengono da Dio; pregiame dunque che siano sanctificate per voi.*"

After some further talk he graciously dismissed me with a sweet smile, saying, "*Figlia mia, io ti benedico;*" upon which he again gave me his hand, which I of course received and kissed kneeling, as is the etiquette, and forthwith retreated, the Pope sounding a small hand-bell, on which the closed doors were swung open.

I returned with the most agreeable impression of his Holiness, and quite able to understand what Count L——, of the Guardia Nobile, felt when he said, "I love Pius far more than even my own father."

Among all the villas I have seen, none have

charmed me like the Doria Pamfili. On entering the great gates, three separate roads diverge in different directions through dense avenues and woods of ilex. In a dreamy and melancholy state of mind—for I had been vexed in the great city below—I chose the central one. I went on until I found myself in an open park, undulating in graceful lines, and rising into rounded heights crowned with wood, from which descended little valleys and deep nooks, black with shade, all sheltered by big weird pine trees, whose brown and naked trunks stood out clearly against the blue sky; for it was a mellow, bright day in the early spring. Tracks, rather than roads, broke the verdant carpeting all around. From the summit of one hillock, and under the shadow of the overarching ilex branches, a charming prospect opened out towards Albano, with the long solemn line of the Campagna stretching away to Ostia, and that now untrodden shore where once mighty vessels rode superbly at anchor, bearing those Roman or Carthaginian warriors whose footsteps trod in blood. From the hillock I perceived a garden beneath me, and the casino, or house, with its high terrazzo. I descended into the garden, and wandered about as if under a magic spell, not a soul, not even a dog, was to be seen,

and no sound broke the musical murmur of the fountains in their marble basins. Great plots of ground were filled with waxy camellias, some pure white, others rosy red, peeping out from the rich shining leaves: and beds of violets of every hue made the very air heavy with their sweet perfume. Beside them grew long rows and plots of oranges, laden with that same glowing fruit which must have tempted our first mother, rather than the pale apple, in the gardens of Paradise. Anon I mounted a double flight of steps, by a great stream spouting out from some marble devices of dolphins and sea-gods, and reached an upper terrace-garden immediately under the casino. The sun's rays here, in January, were oppressive, and the thousand orange-trees dotted about and ranged against the walls rejoiced in the heat, opening their golden bosoms to be warmed by Phœbus himself. In the depths of the wall were cool seats, and purling fountains dashing down through creepers, and moss, and plants, and disappearing one knew not whither. Hard by, to the left, long flights of steps led from the hill above down lower than the garden where I stood. Along the ridge of this hill grew the sacred ilex trees; in the lower garden were the flowers; and as their sweet breath uprose to greet me, visions of angels

radiant with celestial brightness, ascending and descending, seemed to glide before me.

I left the solitary garden where Nature reigned supreme, and reached a large green plateau occupying the summit of the gentle eminence. Here the pine wood stretched away into dells and vales far beyond, leading the eye through perspectives of unspeakable beauty. The grass was dotted with the loveliest flowers: anemones of all colours, the snowy leaves shading into red, and purple, with pink petals; star-like crocuses with yellow hearts; pink hepaticas; and bold, stalwart daisies, like young sunflowers, courting the invigorating sun—a carpet fresh from the woofs of heaven, embroidered by Nature alone, and scented by the spirit of morning with her balmiest breath.

The house contains a few pictures and some solemn statues; but above, from the terrazzo, whither we were led by an antiquated crone, may be seen the most wondrous panorama that ever greeted human eyes. Below stands the great basilica of St. Peter's, within whose walls one tries to think repose all that is mortal of that often erring but attached disciple to whom Christ intrusted the spiritual keys; its colonnades—its fountains—its courts—its pillars—its vast dome—revealed in all their immense proportions. Heavens!

what a noble sight! Behind uprose the stern solemn line of Mount Soracte, standing alone like an island on an earthy ocean, disdaining its Alpine fellows, who cluster and crouch together on either hand, leaving it in solitary grandeur. Then there is Tivoli, wrapped in the Sabine Hills as in a mantle, their summits covered with snow, glistening in the sunshine far up in the azure sky. Then a deep valley, and further on lie Albano, and Castel Gondolfo, and Rocca di Papa, and Frascati—each like a white blossom nestling in the purple mountains; and then the long straight line marking the sea-shore, and the bright mystery of distant ocean. What a circle of loveliness! What a zone of beauty!

CHAPTER XI.

Italian Interiors—Churches: San Lorenzo in Damaso; San Marco—
Baths of Caracalla—The Opera.

To us prejudiced islanders there is nothing more uncongenial and incomprehensible than domestic life in Italy. In high society there is sameness and monotony all over the world, and good breeding, whether in London or Rome, teaches people to tone down and subdue all outward demonstration to the recognised standard of aristocratic reserve. In company, the fiery Italian becomes composed, the loquacious Frenchman silent, and the thorough-bred Englishman doubly impenetrable. But at home, nature peeps out undisguised, and one sees and hears of funny things occasionally.

The Countess G——had a husband—a good, quiet man, who gave her no sort of trouble; indeed, she was apt to forget his very existence occasionally. This forgetfulness was carried so far, that in course of time she picked up a cavalier,

who turned the honourable duo of matrimony into the dishonourable trio of cicisbeism. The Italian husband cared very little about the matter, and the household went on harmoniously as before. In course of time the lady grew weary of her extra spouse, dismissed him, and took another. The quiet Italian husband remained impassible, until he found that cavaliere the second, of a more excitable and unaccommodating nature than his predecessor, upset the domestic economy of the house, and, in particular, kept the dinner waiting. This was an unpardonable delinquency; and the husband, now awake to a sense of his wrongs, piteously complained to a friend in these terms:—"My wife's first cavaliere," said he, "was a gallant' uomo—un bravo ragazzo. I rejoiced to see him. But this, her second amico, is a *birbante*. Since he has come, there is no comfort at home. I wish he were away, and the first back again. *Bisogna che ne parlo colla moglie*. She shall dismiss him, or we must separate. I must have my dinner at the proper time." These are facts, strange but true, and indicate an odd standard of morals.

Other things of a droller complexion often occur, when the singularities committed, however suspicious, are entirely innocent. The Marchesa

R——is a woman about forty, of most pious sentiments, and a devoted invoker of the whole circle of saints. She regularly says her prayers by the calendar, and follows the *quarant' ore* into the obscurest churches. Her abode is an old tumble-down palace in the environs of the city, where she lives on a mere nothing, happy as a queen. The rooms are unencumbered with carpets or furniture, the only superabundance being frescoes, and great gaunt arm-chairs keeping guard along the walls in grim and gloomy state. Fire there is none, even in the depth of winter, that being considered a useless and unhealthy luxury by Italians.

The other day I went to see her, and was ushered into the bare reception-rooms by a ragged boy and a dirty woman. Her niece advanced to meet me, and, after the usual greetings and extravagant expressions of joy considered an indispensable welcome in Italy, she said her aunt was ill in bed, but would receive me notwithstanding. I was led into an immense room, equally devoid of furniture, save a small iron bed standing in the centre, without any attempt at curtains. Here lay the marchesa in a rather dirty nightcap; while at the other end of the room, to my astonishment, appeared a priest dressed in a black *soltana*,

amusing himself with a dog. I was about to retreat at this strange apparition in "my lady's chamber," when she called out a cordial "Buon giorno," and begged me not to mind Fra L——, who was her priest, and didn't signify. She then presented us. I sat down beside her bed, and the Frate returned to his amusement with the dog. After we had talked some time, she requested him to come nearer and join in our conversation, which he did, seating himself, *sans cérémonie*, on the marchesa's bed. She did not look the least surprised, and the good man, who had a most amiable and innocently grave expression of countenance, appeared as unconscious as a child. After we had chatted for some time I withdrew, wondering within myself what I should next see to astonish me in the penetralia of an Italian interior.

One side of a spacious piazza is occupied by the spreading façade of a magnificent palazzo, within whose arched and wide-extending *cortile* deep shadows come and go as the light shoots fitfully down. That palace and *cortile*—designed by Bramante, uncle of Raphael—and the broad staircase descending into it from the first floor, are noted as the scene of a fearful tragedy, too recent, however, in the memories of men to have

acquired the same degree of superstitious awe imparted to deeds of murder mystified and deepened by the legendary horrors of long years of fearful remembrance. On those stairs was Count Rossi assassinated—into that *cortile* his mangled body was thrown—and out of that door was he borne, unshriven and unsung, to his long home. Included in the façade is the church of San Lorenzo in Damaso, also built after the designs of Bramante. This church is an exception to the generality one meets with in Rome, being dark, gloomy, and sombre. A vestibule forming the first division, with low, rounded arches, is Gothic in style. Here are two altars—on one side that of the sacrament. The sun was shining gloriously outside when I entered, making the deep gloom and mystic repose of the church all the more striking. The transition was like passing into another and a holier world—light, atmosphere, colouring, all were different. The sunbeams found their way aslant through a crimson curtain to the sacramental altar, tinged, as it seemed, in their roseate rays with that divine stream which links our souls to Him who, by the shedding of his precious blood, opened that river of living waters along whose current our frail souls can alone hope to reach the heavenly country.

There was an indistinct mist over the remainder of the church. Groups of kneeling figures clustered round the various altars, and told their beads under the deep shade of the heavy pillars. A monk, a nun, bowed in devotion, were here and there dotted about among the crowd, their long black or brown robes giving them a ghostly look, as of dwellers in the tombs rather than flesh and blood. At the extremity of the side aisle, near the high-altar, is a monument to the memory of the ill-starred Rossi, executed by Tenerani, with a fine bust in the centre full of individuality, underneath is an inscription simply recording his miserable death. Tenerani must have laboured *con amore* for his unfortunate compatriot, Rossi and himself being both natives of the marble-girt town of Carrara. In the sacristy—within which there were assembled about thirty priests, all talking and laughing, offering an unpleasing contrast to the calm repose of the worshippers without—is a grand statue, by Maderno, of San Carlo Borromeo, that saint of saints, whose memory Rome carefully cherishes. No other monument struck me as remarkable.

Gay, light, graceful, and elegant is the beautifully-proportioned church of San Marco behind the Piazza di Venezia, at the top of the Corso.

Rejoicing in the richest marbles, bathed in the bright sunlight, all here is gloriously gorgeous. Elegant pillars of a precious and beautiful red marble support the entablature, behind which are piers of a pale grey marble, affording a background and a relief to the brighter colour, delightful to the eye by the charming contrast afforded by the harmonious blending of the two shades. The entablature above is brilliant with frescoes; the side altars radiant with every device and ornament, monumental and artistic; all, however, adapted with admirable taste, and forming a whole magnificent, but not meretricious. In its style San Marco is perfect, and did Rome not possess such inexhaustible treasures in the way of churches, such an edifice would be celebrated as it really deserves. But what is mere decoration, however admirable, in comparison with those immortal works of genius that, on bare and unadorned walls, bring thousands from the uttermost parts of the earth to gaze and to admire? There are some mosaics of the stiffest and most deplorable Byzantine pattern, unutterably hideous in their dolorous, long-faced rigidity. Pictures there are, too, but of no great interest. It is the whole—the entire effect—that makes this church so striking.

After passing the Coliseum and proceeding along the Via di San Gregorio (so named from a church built on the spot where once stood his ancestral palace) through the arch of Constantine, there is not a step without deep interest. The soil turns up rare marbles of every variety. Colombarie constantly occur, and ruins crop out in all directions—in the midst of vineyards, at the cross-roads, or incorporated into modern buildings; while gigantic cactuses, and smooth-leaved orange trees peep over the high walls, with here and there a solitary palm tree rising out of great plantations of enormous reeds. Nothing can be more gloomily solitary than this district of ancient Rome—more suggestive of the past glories of her fallen state. One treads the soil, feeling that an Apollo or a Venus, or perhaps more inimitable treasures than the Belvidere or the Medici, lie buried under one's footsteps.

After proceeding about half a mile along these *lugentes campi*, a huge, far-spreading mass of ruins rises abruptly into sight, on slightly elevated ground, looking much like the broken walls of a feudal castle, the rents of time causing the isolated fragments to stand singly forth like turrets, embattlements, and tottering towers, holding on to the decrepit mass by wide Etruscan-looking arches,

formed of great blocks of stone—a strange, shapeless pile, on whose frowning surface the ivy and clematis embroider themselves in waving patterns, wreathing with annual freshness the sharp hard lines cutting against the deep blue sky. The carriage turned up one of those odd Roman lanes bordered by high walls, that look as if they *could* lead to nothing but a rubbish-heap or a horse-pond, and yet which conceal such treasures scattered along their sides. In a few moments we were under the shadow of the great ruin, and after desperately ringing at a wooden portal, at last found ourselves in the roofless but majestic halls of what once were the Baths of Caracalla. Certainly it is the only Roman ruin above-ground worthy of competing with the Coliseum, and may, perhaps, be preferred by those admiring a ruder and more chaotic mass of positively fabulous extent. All is desolation. One's footsteps echo mournfully under the great arches—grass grows in the vast halls—shrubs and creepers tapestry the roofless walls—wild roses blossom in the place where emperors have trodden. Still, all is grand and majestic in decay, and I felt positively overwhelmed by the stupendous ruins. One immense hall opens into another through gigantic arches in endless succession. After passing through

several, a great space, too huge to be called a hall, is pointed out as the swimming-bath, with a small apartment in one corner used formerly for dressing, where now remnants of heads and cornices, capitals and pillars, lie collected. From hence we mounted a staircase in one of the towers, repaired on the ancient model, with such high precipitous steps that there can be no disputing the fact of the length of classic Roman legs; I would only recommend any antiquarian troubled with a doubt to try for himself. From the summit I looked down among the ruins below and around me, and traced the once splendid halls where the barbarous Caracalla and the luxurious Heliogabalus had whiled away their vicious idleness. On a level with me were arches and turrets, and great isolated masses of the outer wall, huge and shapeless as though an earthquake had tossed them. No one who has not seen it can conceive what a stupendous ruin it is. Here Shelley meditated amid the silence of the past; nor was it possible for ancient Rome to offer a more melancholy and solemn retirement for a poet's musing place. In the spring-time the winds breathe soft and low in mysterious whispers, their violence tempered by the solid walls, while the sun casts bright lights and shadows, and generates a delicious temperature.

A fine view of the distant city is obtained through an arch in the outer wall. To the left stretches the level Campagna towards Ostia, broken only by the great arches of the Claudian aqueduct and by the lovely basilica of St. Paolo fuori le Mura, like a mourning bride, desolate and forlorn in the fever-stricken plain. On descending, I passed into another immense hall, under arches expansive enough to span a river, where are some wonderfully-preserved mosaics near the wall, marking the place of the private baths for the use of the emperors and greatest patricians. These mosaics (once, perhaps, trodden by the wretched tyrant Caracalla himself, fresh from some horrid murder, his hands stained by a brother's blood) are as bright as ever. Around the walls, midway, are the remains of a gallery, whence the combats of the gladiators were viewed by the court whilst the deified monster bathed. Then comes the vast Pinacotheca, or library, with niches for shrines and statues, the soil still upheaved and broken on the very spots where were found the Farnese Hercules and famous Torso of the Vatican; and how many other statues may yet lie buried there, vainly awaiting an enterprising generation! Around this hall are the remains of a similar gallery for viewing the sports of the athletes. How gorgeous

this Pinacotheca must have appeared when decked with statues, pillars, paintings, and stucco, the vaulted roof glorious in gold and colours! Now the damp wind sighs through the desolate halls, and the toads hop over the openings from which fallen statues have been excavated.

A whole party of young priests, having divested themselves of all unnecessary clerical costume, and tied pocket-handkerchiefs over their heads, were playing vigorously at ball in the sunshine; one or two, more studious, conned their books, seated on the great stones scattered around. A new-married couple wandered listlessly about—a pale, fair-haired Saxon girl, who saw nothing of the ruins that was not reflected in her husband's eyes, on whom she gazed unceasingly with long looks of love. He, alas! looked bored, and listened vacantly to the tiresome explanations of a *valet de place*—an animal highly objectionable everywhere, but specially so in a scene where “he that runs may read,” the iron finger of Time having traced the history all too well.

There is every arrangement visible still for the warm or vapour baths, funnels for passing the heated water, and apertures for the evaporation of the steam. Altogether there are eight halls, and the extreme circuit is said to have been five

miles and a half, including the adjoining circus erected by the same wretched son of Severus who barbarously sacrificed his brother, the unhappy Geta, to his ambition. His atrocious character is stamped on the many busts that yet remain of him, all remarkable for sinister deep-set eyes, and a diabolical grin, quite satyr-like. I must not forget to mention that one of the finest specimens of ancient mosaics was found in these baths, representing athletes, masques, and wrestlers, all hideously ugly and unpleasing, but admirably executed, and wonderfully preserved. This mosaic is now shown in one of the halls of the Lateran Palace, where, transported from its proper site, it loses all suggestive interest.

No ruins of ancient Rome have impressed me more than the solitary halls I have endeavoured to describe, and I hope, as the spring advances, often to return and make out more distinctly the site of the two temples dedicated to Apollo and Esculapius, the *genii tutelares* of the place. But I shall look in vain for the great court, surrounded by porticoes that once adorned the inner edifice; and for the Odeon, whence music woke the echoes of the endless galleries and corridors; and for the shady groves of palm trees waving over the gymnasium for running and wrestling in fine weather;

and also for the greater outer halls where poets declaimed and philosophers lectured. Nought remains but lonely vineyards extending on every side, where the patient mouse-coloured oxen of the Campagna turn over the fat, heavy soil with a plough so antique in shape, it might serve as a pattern for what Virgil described in his *Georgics*.

The very existence of theatres at Rome is ignored by the Pope and his tonsured ministers the cardinals, spite of the immense *manifesti* that meet their eyes at the corner of every street, and the glaring fact that at this particular moment certainly some half-a-dozen occupy the idleness of the Romans every evening. The truth is, that Rome is one of the most fastidious places in Italy about acting and music; nothing is tolerated but the very best, and executed in first-rate style. During the Carnival the Apollo is *the* opera-house, situated near the Ponte St. Angelo, almost under the shadow of St. Peter's, so that music, profane and sacred, respond to each other across the muddy Tiber.

A new opera appeared the other night, and I went because I had a box sent me. The theatre was crammed inside with company, and nearly surrounded outside by Papal dragoons, bearing

drawn swords in their hands, and great white cloaks draping about them like togas, the heavy folds falling over their horses' flanks, and looking uncommonly ghostly in the dark. Inside, the passages are guarded by more modernly-attired protectors, smelling furiously of tobacco. The theatres at Rome, spite of the goodly company they contain, are the dirtiest, blackest, most unsavoury places, I believe, in the whole world. Sometimes one's box is filled with such an overwhelming compound that it is indispensable to open the door, but as a soldier immediately comes and looks in suspiciously, and mounts a kind of guard over one, there is no help but to close it. The Apollo is no exception among its fellows, and is as dark and dirty as years of filth can make it. No wandering breath of fresh air ever strayed in there; it would have been frightened long before in the stairs and corridors, and either died, or got out again to moan over the wrongs done it among the richly-laden orange trees and myrtles in the Pope's garden at the Vatican close by.

Up and up stairs we mounted until our box was reached and the door opened, which species of mysterious suspense and expectation preparatory to entering the penetralia of a theatre always

makes my heart beat somewhat quicker. I looked round, and found a nobly-proportioned house, as large perhaps as Covent Garden. If it had only been clean, one might have admired it, but the walls and the ceiling were grimed with the accumulated smoke of some fifty years at least, and the great central chandelier gave so little light that it was difficult to see anything before the footlights were raised. The house was immensely full, the boxes looking like an overcrowded flower-vase, as the pink, and white, and blue draperies of the fair lapped over the edges like great leaves, and here a pretty hand protruded, and there a rounded shoulder. But honour to whom honour is due: no one here goes to the opera dressed in that state of classic nudity in favour at home, where, as Gavarni says, "*Les Anglaises se décolletent jusqu'aux jarretières.*" The dragoons would decidedly be summoned in such case.

As for the opera, I have not the wildest surmise what it was about; the ballet was a regular burlesque, being no other than the sorrows of Mary Queen of Scots done into dancing. Oh! shade of Robertson, Froude, and other learned and grave historians, who have devoted such ponderous tomes to elucidate her history and defend her problematical virtue, what would have

been your outraged feelings could you have seen your poetical heroine reduced to a squab, broad, red-faced woman, of surpassing ugliness, with staring, bead-like eyes, and a great wart on the expanse of her forehead, gesticulating with furious and frantic vehemence, throwing abroad her arms and legs as if they did not belong to her trunk, but moved quite independently on springs? No mad woman escaped from Bedlam could have been more excited. Anywhere else than in Italy surprise would have possessed one at the sacrilegious prostitution of sweet Mary's name; but after seeing *The Prophet* at Florence perform capers and *entrechats*, and dance himself into the good graces of the three Anabaptists, I could wonder at nothing. I believe, if the creation of the world was considered a good *coup* for a ballet, an Italian would be found to arrange the *rôles* and the *pas seuls*, and an Italian would be found to applaud it, provided only the *mise en scène* was sufficiently voluptuous to tickle their fancy. Darnley, a dark, lugubrious man, discovers a fact about which historians are still in doubt, but with the peculiar perspicacity and penetration proper to the *dramatis personæ* of a ballet, he cuts the Gordian knot of ages, and decides as to the guilt of Mary with Bothwell—a lusty, stalwart knight in

full armour, who does unutterable things with his sword, which he continually swings over his head, leaping about the while like nothing human but a Red Indian.

The Italian idea of Scotch costume is exceedingly obscure, as I had already remarked in *Lucia di Lammermoor*. In the present instance the claim of the performers to be considered inhabitants of Old Gaul consisted of a variety of tight, coloured bandages, tied round their legs like garters. Mary is put in prison for her flirtation with Bothwell, who, together with his followers, penetrates there, and swears to liberate her, in order to accomplish which feat some of them descend into the bowels of the earth (trap 2, right-hand wing), and with many grimaces and contortions place a train of gunpowder all ready for explosion. Darnley appears, wearing an angry brow generally, and particularly towards the Queen, who really deserves all the abuse she gets, for her atrocious ugliness; he then enters the palace, and Mary conveniently faints, while Catherine Seaton, a skinny, middle-aged woman with scanty petticoats, executes a despairing fandango around her, until—hey!—presto—away!—up blows the palace, covering the stage with fragments, and the electric light rising out of the ruins makes the house look

like broad day, quite putting the yellow candles to shame. Of what the electric light is typical—unless it be the supposed soul of Darnley—I cannot conceive; but who asks for congruity and consistency in a ballet? Not *Italians*, certainly; so the pit applauds, and the soldiers cry “Bravo!” and we all go off in a very good humour out by the banks of the dark Tiber, still rushing to the sea through the dark night with the same rapid current, whether modern folly or pagan rites “rule the hour.”

CHAPTER XII.

The Cupola of St. Peter's and Sistine Chapel—The Museum at the Lateran—San Pietro in Vincolo and the "Moses."

A GREAT deal has been said and written about the ascent of the cupola of St. Peter's in which I cannot agree; and as I went up yesterday, I conceive myself—minnow though I be—entitled to an opinion among the great tritons of the goose-tail. From the church we entered a door to the left, where sits a functionary to whom the ticket is delivered up; each holder of a ticket being responsible for the safety of the party of five which it admits. A broad staircase, *a cordoni* (meaning that there are no steps, but a steep inclined plane, to ascend), circles round and round; a horse or donkey, biped or quadruped, might go up with perfect ease, so gradual is the ascent. Many emperors, kings, and princesses have so far condescended to stretch their royal legs, as is set forth on the marble slabs that line the walls. We arrived on the roof, which is like the roof of any

other great building, before we were conscious we had done anything. I saw no fountains or workshops save a few sheds in corners, and I could quite realise that I was walking on a roof, and not on some debatable country, extending to a fabulous distance, midway between earth and heaven. I did not see anything astonishing except the size, for which one comes prepared by a knowledge of the vast proportions of St. Peter's. One circumstance is wonderful, and I note the fact, that upwards of six or seven thousand a year is annually expended in keeping the exterior in repair. Standing there, I could not but contrast in my own mind the bald and bare aspect of the leaden plain before me, broken only by the vaulting arch of the central nave, and the huge dimensions of the statues over the façade—great clumsy giants of Bernini parentage—with the delicate tracery, the forest of airy pinnacles and spires, each different and all beautiful; the stars, the crosses, the bosses, pure in colour as when drawn from the marble bosoms of the Carrara mountains, the world of statues, the long vistas of overarching supports, light and bold as the recollection of a dream, seen on the roof of the wondrous cathedral at Milan—that stupendous yet graceful fabric, which in bridal whiteness challenges the snowy

Alps whose crested summits, mingling with the clouds, close in the Lombard plains. There, as I contemplated the elegant confusion of the roof, at certain points perfectly symmetrical, at others absolutely labyrinthine in confusion, like the Fata Morgana turned topsy-turvy, I was not for an instant reminded of the solidity of the structure, but my eye dwelt alone on the incomparable decorations, the inimitable coquetry with which the solid walls are festooned, surmounted by the arrow-like spire dashing upwards into the heavens with a transparent lightness quite miraculous; the walls being open and the staircase visible, as it were, in the air, twisting up cork-screw fashion between the apertures, looking altogether of a material more akin to the vapoury clouds than marble and stone. I must, therefore, commit the delinquency of declaring that I prefer the exterior of Milan Cathedral as decidedly as I do the interior, with its deep, half-revealed Gothic aisles, to the gaudy trappings and glaring light of St. Peter's. But to return.

The great cupola of St. Peter's rises perpendicularly from the roof in a manner so sudden that ascent appears impossible; but entering a small door at the base, we addressed ourselves to the labour, proceeding crab-wise up flight after

flight of stairs, one-sided and lurching, like a ship in a gale of wind, and making one feel about as giddy. These curiously-shaped ascents run between the exterior coating and the interior vaulting of the cupola, and are bent to follow its arching form. At length we gained the gallery of the dome, and looked down from that immense elevation on the church beneath, and on the altar and tomb of the apostles. The four figures of the Evangelists—to my thinking incomparably the finest mosaics in the world—now appeared in their true gigantic proportions. We were the pigmies, and the people below, like dots, darkened the bright marble pavement; while the great letters in the inscription round the entablature grew taller than the tallest man that ever lived. Above was the superb arched roof of burnished gold, covered with mosaics; a glorious firmament, sown with sparkling stars, and a radiance quite celestial, as the sun poured down through the central aperture, lighting up the angels, apostles, saints, and martyrs, who from above keep eternal watch and ward over the sacred tomb below, where burn by night and day the emblematic lamps. The celestial hierarchy around me, prefiguring the elders surrounding the great white throne, seemed planted there in expectation of the last trumpet.

Some more steep climbing up eccentric stairs, and the great outer balcony was reached, and the noble view stretched around. From this belvedere the Eternal City narrows to a space small as the palm of a man's hand, intersected by a thread of water flowing beside the tombs and ruins and the busy haunts of men, towards the desolate Maremma, where a visible curse lies heavy on the land—a curse of sterility, and poverty, and sickness, where life becomes a living death. Rome lies like a corpse at one's feet. The glory of the seven hills is humbled, and their undulations are scarcely perceptible at the foot of the vast basilica, pre-eminent in height and dignity. Twice mistress of the world, Rome can now only be deemed queen of the past. The murmurs of the multitude, confounded with the hum of the fountains, were borne aloft in the sighings of the scented breeze which fanned the orange-terraced gardens of the Vatican. How can vain words do justice to this noblest panorama of the land revered by all mankind as the centre from whence power, arts, religion, laws, history, beauty, bravery, civilisation have risen—the Cybele of Europe?

At this altitude the volcanic Alban mountains, veiled in deep forests, and the calcareous summits of the Sabine heights, looked but low hills, mark-

ing the limits of that vast upheaving plain, the Campagna, nowhere level, yet nowhere precipitous, bounded on one side by the Tyrrhenian Sea, on the other by more distant mountains, dry, naked, solitary, a lonely pine here and there crowning a rounded hill. I thought on all the theories extant accounting for the strange peculiarities of the Roman Campagna; that it had been once an ocean, those heights its shore; Mount Soracte a rocky island, against whose sides the roaring billows beat; that Nature had formed it from the beginning for a great battle-field, whereon the destinies of mankind were to be fought out as long as time endured; that it had once contained countless volcanoes, whose united action formed the unnatural substratum of lava of which it consists. None of these fancies pleased me save the battle-field—that is the impress the heavy lines bear, as though the very hills had hardened after having gazed for untold centuries on blood and horror, death and destruction, where powers, nations, and potentates have fallen, “the Goth, the Christian, time, war, flood, and fire”—the pale faces of the slain turned upwards, making death hideous. The islands on the sea towards Ostia were visible, the clouds of morning mist obscuring the empyrean blue—all, save heaven,

was dead, brown, dried up, a very skeleton of Nature.

Some persons are possessed with a foolish ambition of climbing up into the ball, which will hold about five persons, in an atmosphere resembling the black-hole of Calcutta. I have a desire to be, rather than to seem, and never go anywhere for the mere sake of saying that I have been there, so I gazed at the scene around me, and allowed others to laugh and joke at the mishaps that befell them.

After our descent we strolled into the Sistine Chapel, rigidly guarded by a Cerberus looking out for francs. The interior is by no means large, yet there is a chastened elegance in its aspect quite peculiar—solemn, yet rich, and admirably blending in general effect. I never could endure the "Last Judgment;" it is to me a scene of unutterable Titanic confusion; no peace, no joy, no hope, but all terror, horror, dread, foreshortening, and anatomy. Indeed, it requires no little study to realise which are the sheep and which the goats, so generally uneasy do the entire mass of saints and sinners appear. A great work of art may be invaluable as a study to cognoscenti, and yet most unpleasing and unpalatable to the multi-

tude. The sombre brown of the figures on the blue background reminded me of the grave-like colouring of all nature in the prospect I had just quitted. The attitude of the Saviour has every attribute of a Jupiter Tonans rejoicing in the chaos he again calls forth for the destruction of the creatures he had formed; and the graceful action of the Madonna, veiling herself at the sight of the sufferings she cannot avert, may *sound* poetical on paper, but is quite lost in the agonised mass around her. To me the charm of the Sistine Chapel consists in the beautiful frescoes that adorn its walls, on whose calm outlines the eye rests with complacency after the uneasy action of the "Last Judgment." Beautiful is Perugino's delineation of our Lord's temptation; the three movements combined into one picture with the quaint arrangement common to the early schools. Beautiful also, perhaps finest of all his works, is "Christ delivering the Keys to Peter," the general arrangement and grouping of which served as the precise model to Raphael in his lovely picture of the "Spozalizio," now in the Brera at Milan. Here, too, Ghirlandaio, Roselli, Botticelli, and Signorelli, the great fathers of the Florentine school, have striven in noble emulation, and united to produce a result not only artistically of

the highest excellence, but delightful and admirable in the eyes of all who crowd hither from every quarter of the civilised globe.

The folly of endeavouring to form separate galleries of sculpture in the same city as the Vatican Museum is apparent. Even Rome, were all her subterranean treasures revealed, could never hope to form another such temple to sculpture. The overcrowded rooms of the Capitol Museum present an aspect of confusion proper only to a lumber loft, while the bare walls of the spacious halls at the Lateran are in the other extreme, and appear so nude and unfurnished, it is quite desolating to look on them. Why should not the gems of both collections be placed in that boundless Vatican, whose countless galleries and corridors might yet receive thousands of fresh statues, and still have room, and to spare? On the whole, I was more pleased with the Lateran collection than with that of the Capitol, where, excepting the "Dying Gladiator"—if gladiator we are to call him, with that cord and horn—and the "Flora and Faun," I never could see much to admire. At the Lateran I was enchanted with the Braschi "Antinous"—a colossal statue of miraculous beauty, second only to the "Apollo Belvidere"—if, indeed, second to that. Antinous

appears in the character of Osiris, crowned with ivy berries and leaves, a lotus-flower placed in the centre of the garland—a rich, varied, and classical head-gear of the utmost beauty. The hall appropriated to the family of Augustus is wonderfully grand and interesting. Ranged around the walls stand the solemn statues of the imperial house in calm majestic attitudes, monumental in character. The statue of Livia has a lovely face, and stands in an attitude full of grace and dignity, with one hand upraised; the flowing robes and stately presence breathing a very atmosphere of imperial majesty tempered by womanly sweetness. Augustus and Drusus wear the eternal togas—those classical bedgowns I so detest. Tiberius appears crowned with oak and acorns, a face full of youthful beauty and godlike repose, passionless as the calm surface of the summer leaves. Who could imagine such vices lay dormant under so winning an exterior? Agrippina bears her proud character and great beauty stamped on her lofty brow. Her attitude is less pleasing than that of Livia, masculine determination preponderating over more feminine charms. Two statues of Germanicus, habited in full armour, express an amiable, gentle character, appealing to our sympathies by its unassuming

yet manly expression of perfect goodness. His head is unadorned, and both statues are of high value, from the admirable likeness and perfect state of preservation in which they have come down to us.

Very interesting is the rough Dacian, mentioned by Murray, with the sculptor's points still visible. But most of all was I struck by an admirable basso-relievo on a marble tomb, of Orestes pursued by the Furies—wildly horrible in their hideous aspect—his murder of Clytemnestra and her lover in the centre—and, in the other corner, the shade of Agamemnon, an old man, wrapped in a deep, mysterious cloak, with a hood over his face, inciting Orestes to revenge. This is one of the very finest basso-relievos in Rome. Opposite is an inferior work, the destruction of Niobe's children, on another tomb. Near by are two splendid marble pillars of Pavonazzetto, taken from the bed of the Tiber, whose beauty suggests the question, What must Rome have been, avened with such colonnades?

One of the finest statues here is that of Sophocles, bearing the name of the Antonelli family inscribed on the pedestal. It was discovered by a curious accident. A poor man, working in his vineyard, near the campagna of Conte Antonelli,

brother of the cardinal, came upon a block of stone that resisted all his blows. He dug and dug until he discovered a statue, which he threw upon *terra firma*. Off he goes to his patrone, the conte, to relate to him the occurrence. But, says he, "*cosa importa a me?* I have neither a cart to carry it, nor horses nor oxen to drag the cart; via! there it must lie. Perhaps, however, sua eccellenza the conte would give him something for it?" The conte returned his query like a Quaker, by asking another—"What did he want for the thing?" At last, after a great deal of *discorreria*, fifteen scudi were agreed on (three pounds), and the contadino went away gloriously contented. The statue was dragged to the *cortile* of the count's casino, and lay forgotten in a corner until Gregory, the late pope, during one of his provincial progresses, passed by Terracina and breakfasted with Count Antonelli. Passing through the *cortile*, the papal eyes turned on the recumbent statue. *Ma che cosa abbiamo qui? Qualche cosa di bello mi pare.*" So the statue was raised and examined, and pronounced entirely excellent. The count begged to present the fifteen scudi worth to his Holiness, who gladly accepted the offer, and ordered the statue to be packed off to Rome, where it was cleaned and

repaired by benevolent antiquarians, who, acting as sponsors, named it Sophocles, under which title it now appears, the principal attraction of the third best gallery in Rome—and all for fifteen scudi! The thing *now* is priceless.

The interior court of the Lateran Palace is surrounded above and below with an arched colonnade, richly painted in fresco, which produces a very noble effect. Indeed, the whole building is grand and palatial in the extreme, forming as it does a kind of wing or addenda to the most imposing church in Rome, far more perfect externally than St. Peter's, however inferior to the great leviathan in size. I ascended the stairs, and found the upper suite of apartments of fine proportions, and decorated with much splendour, but desolate, damp, and forlorn. They are now the cradle of an infant picture-gallery, but as yet in a hopelessly infantine state. I remarked one picture by Caravaggio, that Molière of painting, "The Tribute Money," as fine as anything I remember of his works. There, too, is a sweet "Annunciation," by the Cavaliere Arpino, where Mary is represented as the simple gentle maiden one loves to picture her, not the made-up simpering beauty to which she is too often degraded by even the first masters. Her

youthfulness and freshness here are most engaging, and quite charmed my eyes, accustomed to the glare and grandeur of Parmegiano and Domenichino, who never dream but of the Queen of Heaven. The picture by Sir Thomas Lawrence of George IV. is a tremendous affair. I never saw an individual so overladen with orders, chains, ribbon, and velvet, even at the Carnival.

During Lent there are what are called *stazioni* for prayers at all the old out-of-the-way churches; and if they possess miraculous treasures, they are displayed for adoration on these occasions. I have been to-day to San Pietro in Vincolo, where the *stazione* was held, and the church open all day. The road to this church is the identical *Via Scelerata*, so named because here the wicked Tullia, daughter of King Servius, drove over the body of her aged father, murdered by Lucius, her husband, son of the banished Tarquinius. Servius was slain on this very road, situated on the Esquiline, which, when Tullia heard, she mounted her chariot and drove to the Forum, where, unabashed and untouched by her father's bloody death, she hailed her husband king! As she returned home the body of her father lay in the way. The driver of her chariot stopped short, and showed Tullia where her father lay in his

blood, but she *bade him drive on*. The chariot rolled over the body, and she went to her home with her father's blood on the wheels of her chariot.

Flocks of pedestrians and numbers of carriages made the dust fly in perfect clouds about the solitary lanes and walled-in alleys in the vicinity. All the neighbourhood was up and alive. Drove of beggars sit or stand grouped on the steps, and clink their boxes and ask for alms for the sake of the Madonna, and for the love of heaven, with an energy reminding one of their brigand associates, whose prayer becomes a command, and the command death if not promptly obeyed. Some soldiers were keeping watch outside the building. Priests, nuns, fine ladies, contadine, perfumed beaux, and liveried servants, cardinals and monsignori, were streaming in and out of the doors; some kneeling at the altar, others prostrate before a favourite saint, ornamented for the occasion with new artificial flowers. The fine proportions of the elegant church told well as a background to the moving, animated scene, the graceful marble pillars (pilfered from some ancient temple) springing airily to the roof. On the grand altar were displayed the chains which, tradition says, bound St. Peter in prison; hence the name of the

church "in Vincolo." They lay exposed to the veneration of all true Catholics in a small box lined with crimson silk. Wrapped in deep meditation and prayer, numbers knelt on the steps, and so would I have knelt also, if I could have believed the tale, but alas!—"Mi manca la fede!" I thought the chains looked particularly modern, and very weak and feeble in the links—*fancy* sort of chains, and not at all the kind of articles wherewith to bind a man who had a mind to break them. I gazed with the crowd, but did *not* believe.

Flowers (of cambric) ornamented the altar all about, while the grand old "Moses" frowned down from the corner where he is so barbarously wedged in, with a look of supreme contempt at the scene around. The more I look at that statue, the more I dislike it, profane as it is not to rave about the so-called "capo d'opera" of Michel Angelo "the divine." Nothing can be more ill placed than the statue, on a low seat nearly on a level with the spectator, the gigantic form squeezed between two columns, on a monument which all the while is *not* a monument. Certainly this image does not impress one with a high idea of Moses. The grossly sensual expression tells of passions proper rather to a satyr than a lawgiver,

and the long, ropy hair falling from the head and beard painfully remind one of a shaggy goat—faults which are unrelieved by any nobler indications save an air of arrogant command. The drapery, too, is ill folded, heavy, and bad. Should a great lawgiver who speaks with the Almighty appear in such a guise, with such a look? No, truly. Still, amid all its defects, this is a remarkable work of art—specially remarkable for a peculiar savage air of grandeur all its own, and not to be described. It has also great power, consisting in the *anima* which makes the cold marble *palpitate* with vivid expression. The action, too, of the figure is natural, the forms bold without being overcharged, like many of Michel Angelo's works. The modelling of the arms is particularly fine. But how wanting is the statue in all wherein the Greeks so excelled—the sedate, noble simplicity, the profound, contemplative look, communing as it were with eternity, which almost excuse the worship paid by an ignorant people to these sculptured gods. Above the "Moses" lies a recumbent statue of Julius II., so placed as to appear precisely like a sphinx. For this atrocity Michel Angelo is not responsible.

Over an altar there is a lovely St. Margaret, by Guercino, rebuking a monster ready to devour

her. It positively riveted me. One may here admire his admirable colouring, compounded of the Roman, Venetian, and Bolognese schools, with that bold opposition of light and shade in which he so delighted. Who ever had a finer appreciation of female beauty than Guercino, of that glowing, warm, gorgeous type perfected under a southern sun, flourishing along with the luscious grapes and the pomegranates, and often brown and sunburnt as they? St. Margaret is in white, with a purple drapery; her long hair falls dishevelled over her shoulders; and the almost saucy air, girlish yet commanding, with which she menaces the creature (whose great jaws, well furnished with teeth, are opened to devour her) is uncommonly charming. I shall never forget that picture of "Valiant Margaret," as Wordsworth calls her.

In the sacristy hangs Guido's "Hope," a sweet pathetic head, fit to match with the Cenci. There is a picture, too, by Domenichino of "Paul's Deliverance in Prison"—*maniéré*, hard, and ill coloured: the angel looks most *positive* and earthly in his stiff curls. Certainly this "celestial visitant" brought with him "no airs from Paradise." I have no notion of admiring a picture because it is celebrated, and praised by Murray.

CHAPTER XIII.

Baths of Titus at the Coliseum, at San Martino di Monti, and at the Sette Sale—Cardinal Antonelli.

CLOSE by the Coliseum are the Baths of Titus, on the side of a vineyard-covered hill. On driving up, they present very much the appearance of a gigantic rabbit-warren enclosed by brickwork burrowing into the hillside in oblong holes, shaped something like the *vomitoria* in the Coliseum. I was astonished at the contrast they presented to the grand, awful-looking masses of the Baths of Caracalla, which rise like the ruins of some mediæval castle fabulous in extent, with turrets, walls, and bastions cresting the sky. The glories of the Baths of Titus are, on the contrary, deep buried underground, and one must descend down and down deep stairs, and through long subterranean passages, before their wonders are revealed. Here, where the light of the bright sun never falls, and day and night are alike gloomy and mysterious, halls of interminable extent, open-

ing into long suites of chambers, corridors, and temples, penetrate the earth in a state of perfect preservation. The imposing grandeur of this underground palace cannot be described; it impresses the mind with funereal thoughts and speculations on other centuries and nations, when the world was as unlike that place we inhabit as the moon would appear to us were we transported thither.

These ruins have, so to say, a triple antiquity, being supposed first to have formed part of the villa of Mæcenæ; then to have been appropriated to the golden house of Nero, whose memory was so execrated that his burnished palace, of surpassing size and magnificence, was degraded by being made the foundation of the public baths erected by Titus, and its chambers filled up the more securely to consolidate the superstructure, which can alone account for the firm and compact manner in which those portions still unexcavated are completely packed with stone and rubbish, although the roofs and walls are still entire. Standing in the central hall, the long vista opening on either hand is a sight not to be forgotten. It wants but the garden and the trees, bearing the bright many-coloured fruit, to carry one away to Aladdin and the Arabian Nights.

On one side were the rooms intended for winter use, then looking full on the sun, which has never penetrated here for so many centuries; the other façade, for summer habitation, faced a garden, now buried deep down in the soil, and only to be surmised from the situation of a great hall, with an arched opening, in whose centre still remain the ruins of a fountain, where the water welled up from an enormous marble basin, now the wonder and glory of the great vaulted hall in the Vatican. Along the margin where it stood still appear stone troughs for enclosing earth, where flowers—their blossoms reflected in the water—gave the finishing touch to what must have been a scene of more than Epicurean luxury.

There are other places where portions of the Baths of Titus are visible, as, for instance, in the church of San Martino di Monti, which is, however, disputed, for some look on these remains as portions of the Baths of Trajan and the Sette Sale, a general reservoir common to the Baths and Coliseum.

Up a particularly filthy and narrow lane, breaking off from that glorious highway leading in a straight line from Santa Maria Maggiore, crowning the Esquiline with its snowy domes and colonnades, to the old Lateran Basilica, proudly

spreading its immense, though elegantly light, façade on the summit of the Coelian Hill, is situated one of the grandest and most interesting martyr-churches of Rome—San Martino di Monti. No mere casual observer would ever discover the church, hemmed in as it is in a narrow alley bordered by great blank walls, standing in a tumble-down *cortile* where a soldier keeps guard, part of the monastery being occupied as a barrack. On entering the spacious and admirably-proportioned edifice, the eye is perfectly overcome with the gorgeous *ensemble* of painting, gilding, marble, mosaics, and fluted columns, all surmounted by a ceiling so magnificent in purple, gold, and crimson, the colours finely mellowed by age, that it requires some moments actually to realise its splendour. The central nave is large and grand, the columns supporting the aisles of ancient, and therefore classical, workmanship; the altar, raised on double flights of coloured marble steps, is resplendent with magnificent decoration; the tribune above glows in gilding and rich frescoes; and side chapels of great beauty open out beneath the arches of the aisles, decorated with statuary and painting.

I can give no details, for my memory seems oppressed and stupefied by the grandeur of this

- superb *ecclesiastical drawing-room*, such being the only appropriate term I can apply to it. I do remember one curious painting of St. Elijah, as the Catholics call him, who, in company with the
- Wandering Jew, is, according to tradition, supposed to be still walking the world until the end of all things. He, as if wearied by his endless pilgrimage, reposes on a rock, while an angel beckons to him, pointing to the sea stretching away before them, as if animating him to proceed on his wanderings.

The aisles are filled with paintings, alternating with the interesting frescoes of Poussin—poor and washy, however, in execution, I confess, to my eyes, and much injured by damp, as are his water-colour paintings in the Colonna Palace, though, as far as the drawing goes, full of fancy, and rich in Italian character.

I descended down marble stairs to the first subterranean church, situated immediately under the altar, which, being visible from the nave, gives great lightness to the tribune, as row after row of colour marble balustrades meet and intersect each other, ascending and descending very gracefully.

The second church, or crypt, is circular, the arched roof supported by clustered columns of

much beauty. Here lie the bones, not only of Silvester, but of four martyred popes, besides those of many other early confessors to the faith, who sealed their life by a glorious death.

The monk acting as my guide, whom I instantly discovered to be Lucchese from his accent, made his reverence before their remains, and then opened a door at one side, where, through a narrow arched stair, we descended into a dimly-lighted cavernous vault below. Having early been consecrated as a church, and serving as a place of concealment to Silvester in the stormy days of persecution prior to the accession of Constantine, these vaults have been wonderfully preserved—no Roman remains in Rome are more perfect or more striking. Green damp covers the gigantic piers supporting the boldly-arched roof, while here and there great entrances, now built up, lead into other long-drawn aisles—we know not how far beyond—communicating with the interminable network of catacombs surrounding subterraneous Rome.

We walked upon a black and white mosaic pavement, similar to that I have noticed at the Baths of Caracalla. Not a sound, not a sight, but was in harmony with this dark region of the tomb.

"Faint from the entrance came a daylight ray,"

gleaming down the passage by which we had entered into the solemn crypt, heavy with the dews of long ages, and rich in the association of both pagan and Christian Rome. No modern hand has desecrated it—Bernini (thank Heaven!) having left untouched this earliest sanctuary out of the catacombs. A place more awful and solemnising cannot be conceived, and as I wandered among the huge arches and beheld deep vistas of solemn gloom, I felt penetrated with indescribable reverence in the presence of these consecrated remains that even ruthless Time has spared.

Pagan Rome is gone, and Christian Rome is but a name; but those solemn walls stand firm and majestic, even in decay; and those altars, where rest the martyred saints, are entire amid the consecrated gloom which the sun has not penetrated these eighteen centuries.

Close by the church there is a well-walled vineyard, bearing the inscription outside, in small chalked letters, "Sette Sale." A stranger might pass hundreds of times up that lonely lane hemmed in with walls, and not remark it; yet there are treasures of ruins within that wooden door, which opened to us after long knocking.

A highly-cultivated garden appeared, with a broad path winding through the trellised vines, which I followed. The good-humoured contadine stood up as I passed, and, smiling, wished me "*Una buona passeggiata.*"

In one corner of the pretty vineyard, positively bristling with ruins, is a hillock formed of crumbling walls, overgrown with grass, and myrtle, and dwarf ilex bushes, with here and there a long straggling vine, in whose side seven arched openings, hoary with decay, open into seven enormous vaults—great cavernous recesses, all black and dismal—used, as it is supposed, for reservoirs of water to supply the Coliseum and the Baths of Titus, which lie farther on, near the fall of the hill. The cabbages and lettuces grow up to the very brink of these awful pits, and all nature wears a smiling, domestic character, utterly unsympathetic with, and sternly repulsed by, the frowning ruins, which scorn such impertinent approximation.

Wandering down a little farther, I came to an enormous portico, forming one of the angles of the baths, where the philosophers used to expound their Grecian wisdom in the ears of the degenerate Romans. Perhaps under that very arch, the siege of Jerusalem, the obstinacy and destruction of

the Jews, and the magnanimity of Titus were discussed and commented on as the latest "news from the East." How are the mighty fallen! Rome lives but in a few unintelligible ruins—a fragment and a confusion! Titus, his arch with its triumphs, and his gigantic baths, are mouldering in decay. The Jews are wandering homeless over God's wide earth; and here a few olive trees bask in the warm sunshine under the vaulted roof, once radiant in marble and gold, where congregated the learned few whose togas swept the rich mosaic floors. The pillared colonnades, the shady groves, the magnificent shrines, have vanished; the sumptuous pile is no more; and Nero's golden house, accursed for his sake, and exiled from the surface of the earth, alone preserves its subterranean walls, buried deep down in the bosom of mother-earth—that parent whose cold embrace cherishes so carefully all intrusted to her keeping.

I made the acquaintance to-day of a very remarkable man, on whose shoulders at present rests the entire responsibility of the Papal Government—Cardinal Antonelli, secretary of state to Pius IX., and minister also of finance, of police, of justice, of everything—*multum in parvo*, in fact; for he has appointed such mere lay figures to these

various offices that he alone bears the onus and the weight of the entire machine of state.

Antonelli was instrumental in his Holiness's escape to Gaeta, and very nearly himself got murdered in those stormy days when Rome was given up to Red Republicans. But now he is installed in the Vatican, and appears neither to dread nor to remember the fate of poor Rossi, the best and most upright minister in Italy. Without question, his successor, Antonelli, is a very remarkable person, and gifted with superior talents for government. *Reste à savoir* if one man *can* do everything—a state problem the solving of which has cost the Roman States another revolution.

In the meantime, the good Pope is given up to prayer and religious observances, and Antonelli alone guides the helm of state amid the angry breakers and sunken rocks of the stormy sea that beats furiously against the aged and rotten timbers of the fisherman's *navicella*, weakened, crazy, and disjointed by the tempests of accumulated centuries.

On the occasion of our visit to the cardinal, on whom fortune smiles, we entered the labyrinth of courts forming that part of the Vatican in which the Pope resides by a private entrance,

after making the circuit of St. Peter's, whose colossal proportions can only be rightly estimated by such a *giro*, or by mounting the cupola. Our carriage dashed through entrance after entrance into a succession of courts, all guarded by mounted sentinels, until reaching the spacious and beautiful *cortile* decorated by Raphael, where we dismounted. An interminable staircase of perhaps one hundred steps next appeared. Up and up we climbed, encountering Swiss guards at due intervals. At last, having gained the fourth story—quite the *piano-nobile* at Rome—came the ante-room, with its allowance of cringing menials, who, as we were honoured guests, bowed us at once into a handsome apartment furnished like a dining-room.

As the cardinal was engaged at the moment, we were here entertained by an old French monsignore, canon of St. Peter's, a rabid *Légitimiste*, as he informed us.

My Italian companion, the Countess San G——, is a perfect worshipper of the Emperor Louis Napoleon, and of the Bonapartes collectively and generally. This she was too cunning and acute to declare openly, but drove the poor old monsignore skilfully into a corner, forcing

him to acknowledge how much the Emperor Napoleon had done for France.

"Mais oui, mais oui; la Providence a agi, il faut l'avouer," replied he. "Enfin, la Providence se sert de tous les moyens," in a whining tone.

"Was not Marshal MacMahon a great general?"

"Mais oui; un homme de talent, cependant mondain."

"Ah!" said my friend, "France is prosperous; cela suffit; ses beaux jours sont revenus;" at which undeniable fact the canon looked glum, although the pink of old-fashioned French *politesse*.*

Feeling himself worsted, he passed to a tremendous eulogy of the cardinal.

"Mais il fait tout, ce cher cardinal; il a des talents universels; il pense à la finance, à la diplomatie, au gouvernement intérieur; enfin, c'est un homme miraculeux, et si bon, si aimable!"

As this "universal" character is the very thing for which Cardinal Antonelli is reproached by his enemies, who stigmatise his ministry precisely because he insists on doing everything, I could scarcely suppress a smile at the ill-timed enthusiasm of the canon.

"Ce cher homme," continued he, "vous savez qu'il a manqué d'être tué lorsque le saint Père

* This was written before the war.

s'est enfui: comment aurait-il jamais échappé? Ah! il faut adorer la Providence!" saying which, he folded his hands, and assumed an unctuous look of devotion.

I was growing weary of this old man, with his "providential" tirades, when the major-domo entered, and announced that the cardinal would receive us.

We passed through a suite of rooms to the writing apartment of his Eminence, where were tables overlaid with letters and papers, all arranged with the nicest order. Here stood the cardinal, a tall, handsome man, of a grave and majestic presence, which at once, without any effort on his part, inspires respect. He was dressed in a purple robe, or *sottana*, edged and trimmed with red, a red skull-cap on his head, stockings to match of red silk, with the nattiest shoes on the neatest feet, set off by gold buckles.

I cannot positively assert that Antonelli is handsome, but he has a fine Roman face, almost Zingaro in character, with brilliant black eyes, and that rich sun-burnt complexion common to Italians. The expression of his countenance is excellent; and the suavity and kindness of his manner in receiving a party of ladies (who must have been a great nuisance to him) admirable.

My companion the countess was intimately acquainted with him and his family; nevertheless, her reverence for a cardinal prince operated on her so strongly, that she cast herself on her knees before him and kissed the hem of his robe—a proceeding he vigorously opposed, but without succeeding. My genuflexions were also profound, but of a more moderate character, as became a *protester*, within the precincts of the Vatican.

The cardinal led us into a charming boudoir, or drawing-room beyond, exquisitely furnished: sofas and chairs of the richest Berlin work; carpets into which one's feet sank, as it were, to rise no more; walls covered with valuable paintings in glowing frames; and crystal cabinets enshrining priceless collections of those articles named of "bigotry and virtue." The windows looked out over the great Piazza of St. Peter's, and formed part of the façade that faces high up over the colonnades to the right. Sure never were fairer apartments wherein a favoured cardinal kept his state; not even Wolsey at Hampton Court was better or more nobly lodged.

We two ladies were seated on the sofa, while the cardinal placed himself opposite, and it was then I fell to admiring the extreme beauty of his foot and the almost feminine whiteness and deli-

cacy of his hands, where on one finger sparkled a superb emerald. A conversation now began with the contessa, who rattled away in a lively, sparkling way on a variety of subjects. She spoke of her desire to make converts to the Catholic faith. Antonelli received her remarks with a silent smile.

"I," said he, after a pause, "being a Catholic and a cardinal, naturally would desire to see all the world even as myself—*come son io stesso*—but such a change should arise from deep conviction and mature reflection in order to be acceptable to God. I little admire the violent efforts of those who think that by promiscuously making converts they perform a good and acceptable work. For worldly motives to operate in such a question is obviously most improper, and I much fear many sudden conversions of inconsiderate persons arise from that cause."

These were noble sentiments, and came with double force from Rome and the Vatican in the nineteenth century. After this little rebuff to the good-natured but over-zealous countess, who so eagerly desires to see the whole world within the embrace of the "one true Church," the conversation turned on England. Of that country the cardinal professes himself a great admirer. And

the extraordinary memory which he possesses! All he reads he remembers, even to the most minute descriptions of public buildings, streets, &c. He told us that he had astonished the Duchess of S—— by describing to her exactly the exterior of her London mansion.

"Why, you never told me you had been in London," exclaimed she.

"I have never been there," replied the cardinal; "but I read some years ago a description of the great London houses, and I remember some of the distinctive features of your Grace's mansion. And," continued he, "I have surprised Germans and French too with my accurate descriptions of certain marked features in their capitals."

He inquired particularly about myself, taking really a lively interest in' much I told him.

"Come to me," said he, "if I can serve you. It would give me pleasure to be useful to you."

Twenty requests were on my lips in a moment, especially an introduction to a certain ambassador; but I reflected that the offers of princes were sufficiently complimentary and gracious in themselves, and, like relics, should be hung up to be venerated and admired, but not to be used. However, I must observe, *par parenthèse*, respecting Cardinal Antonelli, that I knew an English

lady really in distress to whom his kindness and protection, when invoked, were quite Samaritan.

We chatted on in the most agreeable way for more than half an hour, and, although prepared to move, the cardinal did not allow conversation to flag for an instant. He made the contessa quite happy by promising her the consecrated candle which he was to bear at the approaching feast of the Purification, one of the grandest in the Roman calendar; and charmed me by the paternal kindness with which he addressed her as daughter, calling her *mia figlia*, with the most graceful tact possible, assuming thus his own position while he indicated hers.

At last we rose to depart, when the contessa, spite of all opposition, would perform the same genuflexions, although he exclaimed—“*Ma—le prego—Davvero mi duole—Come mai,*” &c. He shook hands with me, and actually conducted us to the outer door of his private rooms—an attention duly observed by the *servitù* in waiting, who received us with all manner of homage in consequence. So we retreated, quite *comblées d'honneurs*, and descended to our carriage in the best possible humour with ourselves and all the great universal world.

CHAPTER XIV.

A Roman Jumble, or Sketch of a Day.

ONE of these fine, bright, sunshiny days is so mixed and varied by all sorts of sights, that it is like a mimic life. The four-and-twenty hours extend and dilate into a well-filled existence, and I find myself taking in so many and varied ideas, and passing through such shifting scenes, that, unless I came home and put it all down, I could never believe one day would afford so kaleidoscopic a variety. It is only at Rome one can spend such days, where the present and the past meet, clash, or harmonise, as the case may be; where one may rush from the catacombs to the marionnettes, or from an appointment with the Holy Father to the hurdle-race ridden by real English jockeys. New phases of life open out with the passing hour, each by turns engrossing, enticing, intoxicating to various minds. Every chord of intellectual sympathy is touched, and the spirit grows well-nigh paralysed under the over-

whelming sense of its utter inability to grasp even a portion of the mighty whole that unfolds in all its excellence before it. The sculptor—the painter—the antiquary—the lover of antique art—the philosopher—the interpreter of Christian antiquity—the profound theologian—the admirer of Nature in her wildest and most unadorned beauty—the epicurean, who delights in sumptuous palaces, marble halls, and pillared terraces, stretching into orange groves luxuriant in tropical profusion—the sportsman who revels in his exhilarating flight across the free Campagna—the fine lady, who lives only for routs and balls and incessant dissipation—the nonchalant *élégant*, her husband, who reads the *Times*, and lives at “the club” all day—the solitary pilgrim, journeying from distant lands to fall prostrate before Christ’s vicegerent upon earth—the soldier who loves reviews and the “pomp and circumstance” of war—the lawyer, who buries himself in musty libraries—the architect, come from the far North to study classic porticoes, colonnades, and piazzas of Palladian palaces built for the bright summer, glorious as its sun, where other Romeos may love, and still fairer Juliets be wooed, under the shadow of deep cypresses, in azure nights when reigns a softer day—the musical dilettante, who finds here the best opera in har-

monious Italy—last of all, the idle rich vagabond, without end or aim in his senseless life, simply seeking for amusement,—Rome, in her boundless multiplication of varied resources, will satisfy and fascinate.

In the morning I strolled into the Borghese Gallery, always invitingly open—that superb palace which flings back as it were disdainfully the meaner houses pressing upon its long façades, stretching away down entire streets. Little Pauline Bonaparte must have felt rather proud when, on entering the grand central *cortile*, with its open galleries and graceful colonnades, she was hailed as its mistress.

The apartments devoted to the picture-gallery are on the ground-floor, and of almost interminable extent, ending in a corridor decorated with a sparkling fountain, and commanding a lovely view of St. Peter's, rising out of the green meadow encircling the Vatican on that side, and extending to the water-side. Close under the windows rolls the turbid Tiber, widened here into the Porta di Ripetta, with divers squat, miniature steamers riding on its muddy current, which take passengers and cattle (the latter decidedly predominating) up the river as far as possible into the dreary Campagna.

I had already visited the Borghese Gallery many times, but it is a place not only to see, but to live in, among those grandest pictures time has spared. I of course saluted the divine Sibyl—the presiding deity of the whole collection, singularly bright and glowing for the usually sombre pencil of Domenichino. I cannot but look, however, on that picture as intended for a St. Cecilia rather than for the pagan prophetess. Then there is her magnificent rival, Circe, by that wonderful colourist the Ferrarese Dosso Dossi, who has here called forth the most gorgeous *ensemble* of beauty the eye ever rested on. There is a strange repose in the aspect of the enchanted wood within whose shadow she rests, dressed in a rich Eastern costume, drawing around her circles of magic incantations, which she calmly watches, as though certain of success.

Of what a different class are the Sacred Families by Andrea del Sarto!—monotonous in expression and grouping, always the same face of his somewhat Dutch-featured wife, with nearly the same head-dress, but soft and harmonious in colouring, as though his brush had been dipped in morning dew: *ruggiadoso*, as the Italians have it—a word dropping as it were with glittering dewdrops.

But most of all do I revel in three or four pictures in the Venetian rooms; specially those grandly beautiful Graces, by Titian, bearing the bow and quiver of Cupid, whose eyes Venus (a type of perfect loveliness) is binding.

Where did Titian procure such models? or *did* he ever procure such models? Rather are they not visions of his glowing imagination called forth from the vasty depths of his own Venetian skies, as he floated in his gondola under the fragrant shade of the green islets that encircled his native Venice?

Then comes "Sacred and Profane Love," contemplating each other on opposite sides of a well, with Cupid between them playing with the water: the one calm, reserved, reflective, clothed in white robes of the Venetian style, wearing flowers in her auburn hair; the other vain and careless, with a certain *abandon* in her attitude, revealing her terrestrial propensities—the ever-lighted lamp of pleasure burns in her upraised hand, as she turns towards her staid companion, her graceful limbs concealed by no jealous drapery, but set off by the red mantle lying near, and the thick, tangling tresses of golden hair falling over her snowy shoulders. What shades, what magic colouring enchant the eye in these glorious works of Titian,

he who created at pleasure the entire circle of Olympus—free, open, and serene!

Hard by hangs Giorgione's "David," clad in a complete suit of silver-steel, standing out from the canvas with the power of a basso-relievo, the personification of a chivalrous knight, though, sooth to say, as little indicative of the young Israelite as possible. This picture is a fine specimen of the painter's austere, emphatic manner.

I have generally an objection to *chefs-d'œuvre*, and will frankly confess that I care neither for Raphael's "Entombment"—to my mind a feeble, inexpressive group, always admitting the extreme beauty of some of the heads—or for Correggio's "Danaë," a picture where connoisseurs profess to admire the finish of his *chiaro-oscuro* and the transparent brilliancy of the lights. To me she appears a mincing, ill-limbed, quite unattractive nymph—ungracefully sprawling on a couch, and not at all worthy the fuss Jupiter made about her.

Nor do I care to dwell on Garofalo's great picture, stiff and mannered, though admirably coloured; but my eye rests with delight on that noblest of Raphael's portraits, called "Cæsar Borgia," where the painter has evoked so vivid and imposing a likeness of that depraved but

romantic man, who horrifies yet delights one by the alternate depths of wickedness and bravery, of cruelty and intellect, that chequer his life. There, encased in that frame, he stands; and every one who has ever heard his once dreaded name can read his character in those bold, commanding eyes, which seem to follow one round the room like an evil spirit.

I delight in the murmuring fountain splashing melodiously over the porphyry pedestal in the centre of the great hall, the only sound that breaks the silence of those endless rooms. And I delight, too, in the chamber of mirrors, where painted garlands and festoons obscure the brilliant glass which they are intended to decorate. Cupids lurk among the flowers, and roll in very joyousness under their perfumed shade: while gilding and stucco, and statues and marbles, enrich the walls and the ceiling. Even for stately, palatial Rome this is a glorious old palace, and my memory will often fondly return to it, summoning back the pleasant hours I have dreamed away in its silent halls.

From the Borghese Palace I ordered the carriage to drive by the Corso towards the Aventine. The Corso to me bears the impress of a perpetual *festa*, arising, I suppose, from reminiscences of the

Carnival and those two hours of the "Moccoli," when its lofty sides become transformed into cavernous precipices of incessantly-moving lights, glittering and sparkling with an eccentric will-o'-the-wisp brilliancy, that puts the pale stars to shame. At the top of the Corso the dark turrets of the Austrian ambassador's palace frown down on the ever-gathering crowd below—all that remains of the feudal ages in Rome. Built, like the Farnese and so many other palaces, from the spoils of the Coliseum, it was once inhabited by Charles VIII., when, full of young and untaught presumption, that carpet-knight descended into Italy, as he imagined, to behold and to conquer, until the Keys of St. Peter and the Lion of Venice gave him such sore blows he was glad to return to "la belle France." This imposing structure, more a fortress than a palace, is the only spot in Rome which really preserves the characteristics of the middle ages. Connected with the Piazza and Palazzo di Venezia is the glowing little church of San Marco, the glittering new-fledged daughter of a glorious time-honoured mother, on the placid waves of the blue Adriatic. Near at hand a whole faubourg of palaces raise their proud heads in mutual rivalry—the Doria, the Altieri, and the Torlonia, where that citizen keeps his state by

the side of Rome's most ancient nobles. Presiding over the district appears the sumptuous church of the Gesù, dark and sombre in its magnificence as the pages of its annals. Here, in a gorgeous chapel, lapped in a funereal urn of bronze and gold, under a winding-sheet of marble, with precious stones and Oriental alabaster heaped around, the whole surmounted by an enormous globe of lapis-lazuli, lies Ignatius Loyola—his mausoleum as resplendent as his life was poor. Statues people the lofty aisles; pictures animate the glittering altars; the rarest marbles sustain the roof; and the most precious metals form the capitals. His history is written on the walls in marble and in bronze, and an image of solid silver adorns the altar. Enthusiastic, devoted, brave, the Spanish monk was the latest, and perhaps the strongest, support of the Church. Its foundations, sapped by Luther, were sustained by Loyola. Strange contrast! the Guelphic shrine of Loyola hard by the Ghibelline palace of the Austrian Cæsar! Theocracy and feudality face to face, measuring each other like two athletes in an arena! Another palace is near, forming a part of this suggestive corner, but, like the history of its race, it lies detached—that of Madame Mère, where once resided the mother of the plebeian

Charlemagne, a ruler who, if fate had spared him, would have really established throughout Italy *lo buon stato* of which poor Rienzi dreamed.

But I have been tempted to linger on my road, and at this rate shall never complete, as I desire, the day that I have chalked out. Let us on to the Aventine, once divided from the Palatine and the Capitoline Hills, in the days when history was young, by a marsh so profound that the plebs of Rome could only reach their favourite hill in boats. On we go, skirting the open ground where stands the temple of Vesta, the prettiest ruin perhaps in the world, its base washed by the Tiber, and the church, known as the Bocca della Verità, once a temple dedicated to Ceres—mounting an ascent, up the steep side of the Aventine, where none but Roman horses could have kept their footing, to say nothing of dragging a heavy carriage after them. I was extremely alarmed at finding our centre of gravity so utterly unsupported: but as the Italian coachman only laughed at my fears, and declared it would be a *vergogna* towards himself if I did not allow him to proceed, I was fain to sit still and resign myself to my fate. Arrived at the summit, horrid, envious walls rose up, bordering lonely lanes which opened out in various directions. Not

a soul appeared—not a sound was heard, save the busy hum of men below, blended with the rushing waters of the Tiber. Above, all was solitude and desolation. The very ruins are no more; destruction and time have not spared a stone. The Aventine possesses only suggestive recollections. Instead of being crowned by the sacred Grove dedicated to the Furies, it is belted by a noble zone of churches. The walls, however, were impenetrable; and I could only dismount and dream of Hercules and his victory over the ancient monster, and remember the unpropitious augury of Remus, and rebuild in my own mind the magnificent shrines and temples that once uprose on this hill in honour of Diana, erected by the united Latin tribes in emulation of her great fane at Ephesus—the stately edifices in honour of Juno, and of the Bona Dea, who sat enthroned, crowned with her mural coronet. It was on the Aventine that the last Gracchus retired to die—that Marius was born—and, more interesting still, that the second separation of the senate from the people occurred after the death of Virginia in the Forum. Those words of fire in which he dedicated the soul of Appius to the infernal gods had no sooner been spoken by Virginius than the plebeians, goaded to madness,

retired to the Aventine; but not before the body of the slaughtered Virginia had been borne in solemn procession through the city, followed by the Roman matrons and damsels strewing flowers, jewels, and locks of their own hair as offerings to her offended manes.

Virginius, on returning to Rome from Mount Algidus with the revolted legions, encamped on the Aventine. Here, too, were situated those once beautiful Horti Serviliani, in whose groves Nero took refuge when he fled from his golden house during the sedition that cost him his life. The Tiber lay invitingly at his feet, as it winds round the abrupt slopes of the Aventine, and he determined to end his life by a plunge in its waters; but, pusillanimous and undecided, he, who was unworthy to live, wanted courage to die!

Along the centre of the hill extends a broad road, where stand three churches—Santa Sabina, San Alessio, and the Priorato—without doubt erected on the site of pagan temples. I tried in vain to obtain admission to San Alessio; but I penetrated into its neighbour (only divided from it by a garden), and entered a *cortile*, within which stands the dignified but modern-looking church of Santa Sabina, on the supposed site of

the temple of Juno Regina. It might have served as a portico to a city of the dead, so desolate was its aspect. Grass grew in the *cortile*, and moss had gathered round the columns. Unbroken silence prevailed: the very birds were silent, and I felt actually afraid of waking the melancholy echoes by pulling a bell at one of the great doors.

After waiting some time—for in Italy patience becomes one of those cardinal virtues one is forced daily to practise—a boy appeared and opened the church, a fine large building of basilican form, but exceedingly damp and chilly, with scarcely a vestige of antiquity remaining. In a side chapel is one of the most beautiful pictures in Rome, the “Virgin of the Rosario,” painted by Sassoferrato, which, being hung in a good light, is seen to perfection. It reminded me of those pretty verses (a remnant of the republic) addressing the Virgin as—

“Maria della bionda testa
I capelli son fila d'oro,
Rimirando quel bel tesoro,
Tutti gli angeli fan festa.”

The Virgin, a beautiful creature, not too much idealised, draped in red, presents the infant Saviour to San Dominico and Santa Catarina of

Siena, who, habited as a nun, kneels at her feet. There is a sweet youthfulness in the figure of the saint which is extremely touching; a sort of devotional *abandon* in her prostrate attitude full of expression. Beautiful angels, graceful as Albano's Cupids, hover above, bearing a red flag or drapery over the Virgin, the warm tones of which harmonise charmingly with her robe and the white lily at her feet.

I left the church and strolled along the summit of the Aventine, silent and musing as all nature around. The sun shone hotly, though in January; and all around prevailed that death-like repose peculiar to mid-day in Italy. I wandered into the open *cancello* of a villa, and followed a dark walk of overarching box and ilex, on to a stone terrace overlooking the city, which lay at my feet, divided by the river into two unequal portions. There was the Ponte Rotto, now broken no longer, a handsome iron suspension-bridge connecting the old Roman arches yawning on either side of the river. Beyond, in the centre of the current, was the island of the Tiber, with its ship-like prow, still retaining the artificial appearance of a vessel which the ancient Romans gave to the spot where stood the once magnificent temple of Esculapius. On the opposite or Tras-

tevere side, gardens filled with richly-laden orange and lemon trees enlivened the long sombre lines of the houses, flinging back the sun's rays, and lighting up the bright globes of fruit that clustered on the dark boughs; the Janiculum hill backing the prospect broken by villas and casinos, with here and there a solitary pine tree.

The church of the Priorato is situated in this romantic garden, belonging now to Cardinal Marini, and incorporated into his villa. Within the church, its walls all white as the driven snow, lie monumental effigies of Knights of Malta in full armour, carved in marble, stretched in stern repose, each on his funereal pile.

The woman custode threw open a wide door, and a glorious view burst into sight. Rome was invisible, but the windings of the Tiber through the leafy groves called Campi del Popolo Romano, and the desolate Monte Testaccio, surmounted by a single cross, occupied the foreground. Beyond lay the low, marshy Campagna towards Ostia, broken by the magnificent basilica of San Paolo fuori le Mura, surrounded by vineyards and gardens, the trees just bursting into snowy blossoms. All save this bright spot was indescribably melancholy. In the surrounding plain, malaria, ruin, decay, and pestilence unite to form a wilderness

noxious in summer both to man and beast. The wind sighed gently as it rose from the plain, fanning the deep woods of the garden, like the voice of Nature mourning over the desolation of this once rich and pleasant land.

I turned into a little lawn in the surrounding garden, where grew an immense palm tree, at whose foot ran a little streamlet, issuing from a broken fountain, presided over by some mutilated god of ancient Rome, now shorn of his fair proportions, "sans teeth, sans eyes, sans taste, sans everything." By this time the whole population of the custode's family having gathered round the *forestiera*, all repeating the usual cry of "*Dammi qualche cosa*," I beat a rapid retreat.

The roads along the Aventine, now mounting up, then dashing down, covered with rough masses of unbroken rubbish, would be the despair of any but Roman coachmen, who possess the art of teaching their horses to climb like cats. Down at last we jolted into a deep hollow at the back of the Forum, to a dirty, miserable open space, where the wretched malefactors of modern Rome are executed. A more dreary place to die in can scarcely be conceived.

It was but a moment, and the intervening walls shut out the dreary arena where crime sighs

out its last wretched groan; and I found myself descending into a kind of hole before an ancient church in my search for the Cloaca Maxima, whither I was bound. Beside the church, and much below the level of the surrounding buildings, stands a well-preserved marble arch, low, but of massive proportions, having four distinct arched entrances, marking the meeting of four ancient highways. Rows of niches, separated from each other by small columns, still remain, indicating where statues once stood; and it has a solid, substantial look, defying even now time and decay. The arch is that of Janus Quadrifrons, and the church is that of St. George, whose name, joined to our national cry of "Merrie England," still defies the world.

Close beside the church (a grotesque old pile, sinking into mother-earth out of sheer weakness and old age) stands another arch, almost incorporated into the building, richly decorated with arabesques and bas-reliefs, erected to Septimius Severus by the bankers and tradesmen of the city. On one side appears the emperor, with his consort Julia; on the other, their sons Geta and Caracalla, though the figure of the former has been effaced by order of the brother who so barbarously caused his death.

Here was a rich corner that detained me some time, though no Cloaca could I discover, and the solitude was unbroken by the appearance of even a beggar. I was just going away in despair, when I was attracted towards a pretty garden in which some labourers were working. On my asking where was the Cloaca, one of the men led me along a little pathway to a screen of orange trees skirting a bank, from whence the ground fell rapidly towards a deep watery ditch, penetrating the adjoining houses through an arch, precisely as a stream passes under a mill.

"Ecco," said he, "la Cloaca."

The place swarmed with washerwomen, who scrub perpetually at small reservoirs in the thickness of the wall, under the massive vaults once the pride of Rome.

I was infinitely disappointed, and could only marvel at the high trumpeting which lead half Europe to gaze on an impure ditch! It is all very well for books and antiquarians to tell us that those blocks of stone are of Etruscan architecture, and were hewn and constructed in the time of Tarquinius Priscus, fifth king of Rome; but these details do not alter the fact that the much-extolled Cloaca, through which Strabo says a waggon loaded with hay might once pass, must now be

classed as one of the many disagreeable objects from which one turns disgusted away.

While I stood there, a Cistercian monk entered the garden dressed in white, with the red and blue cross peculiar to the order conspicuous on his breast. He had spied me out, and came to ask for "elemosina," that universal chorus of the modern Roman tongue. He was a venerable-looking old man, and I fell into conversation with him.

"You are English?" said he.

I owned the soft impeachment.

"You are a Catholic?"

"No," replied I.

"Are there," said he, "many convents in England?"

"Very few," said I, "and we wish that there were still fewer. Monks may be very well here—in questo paese—but we are too active and busy in the North to admire them."

"Alas!" said he with a sigh, "la Madonna vi aiuta! Our great convent," continued he, "is in France; there are none of our order in England, dove per lo più so bene che ci sono pochi Christiani"—such being the opinion Catholics express when they speak frankly of *us*, who esteem ourselves the lamps of the world, the sun and

centre of civilisation! We are not even Christians!
O miserere!

In this obscure neighbourhood are the now nearly invisible remains of the Circus Maximus, under the shadow of the Palatine, which rises abruptly aloft, crowned with the stupendous ruins of the palace of the Cæsars. The Circus, situated in a vale between that hill and the Aventine, must ever be interesting as the well-known site of the rape of the Sabine women.

Successive rulers, from the time of Tarquinius Priscus to the Emperor Claudius, enlarged and embellished this the grandest monument of Rome before the erection of the Flavian Coliseum. Gold, marbles, statues, and altars were not wanting for the adornment of this rallying-point of two hundred and sixty thousand spectators, where horse, chariot, and foot-races, wrestling, boxing, and combats with wild beasts, varied their amusement. On the spina passing down the centre of the arena were erected the two obelisks now adorning the Piazza del Popolo and the square of the Lateran, at whose base were placed the bands of music that enlivened the audience during the games. Of the vast multitude who age after age applauded the skill of the charioteers and the courage of the gladiators, history only records the grati-

tude of the lion to the generous Androcles, who, being exposed to fight with wild beasts, was recognised by a lion from whose paw he had some time before extracted a thorn, who fawned upon him in the midst of that great circus, and licked his hand. Even the iron Romans were interested by so touching a sight, and the gratitude of the noble animal saved his benefactor's life.

Alas for the utilitarian nineteenth century! the site of this once superb arena is now converted into a gasometer, as red and as flaunting and ill-odoured as any gasometer in any little country town; and there is a pert little white house in the centre of the yard, and a cast-iron railing in front fresh from Birmingham, desecrating the soil where kings, dictators, and Cæsars held their imperial state, their gorgeous togas sweeping the mosaic floors as they passed out of their gilded palaces on the Palatine down through the marble colonnades of the stately Forum, to witness the cruel pageant displayed on "a Roman holiday."

Leaving this part of the city, I drove by the Coliseum towards the magnificent basilica of San Giovanni Laterano, the parent church of Rome, whose porticoes and domes crown the Cœlian Hill, and are approached through a long park-like avenue extending from the grand façade of the

Lateran in a straight line to the church of Santa Helena, a large and stately edifice famous for the possession of a fragment of the true cross brought from Jerusalem by the Empress Helena, and enshrined in a chapel which no woman may enter. Passing the church—now closed, as it was past *mezzogiorno*—we proceeded through high walls enclosing villas and gardens; by ruined aqueducts whose arches, majestic in ruin, rose up before us like visions of the mighty past; on to where the Porta Pia opens into the Campagna. About a mile along the road paved like a street (and that a Roman one, being as rough and uneven as possible), stands the Villa Torlonia, for which I was bound.

The villa, or casino, or mansion, is stuffy and ill ventilated, with a great central saloon, surrounded by a suite of small rooms little better than cupboards. There is a general want of comfort, and a great deal of fine furniture, gilding, and mosaics—

“Palladian walls, Venetian doors,
Golden roofs, and stucco floors.”

It was evident, in making the circuit of the grounds, that the proprietor had been haunted by visions of an English garden, for I came on stunted fir trees, low shrubberies, little ponds, and rank

plateaux of grass, jumbled together in a manner quite irrational for this country.

My day had already been varied enough, but there were still further contrasts in waiting, as it was not more than three o'clock, and our list not yet completed. How intoxicating it was thus to surrender oneself to the varying impressions, scenes, sights, and wonders around, making one day in Rome richer, fuller, and more satisfying than years of ordinary life! I re-entered the grand old walls that yet girdle Rome—those walls so broken by ruined towers, and castellations, and mouldering arches, with here and there higher towers flanking Etruscan-looking gates breaking the shadows that began to fall, with glimpses of bright sunshine.

We passed through a maze of dirty cavernous streets, damp and mouldy, and unwarmed by the life-giving sun, to where the Forum of Trajan sinks below the modern level of the city, in an oblong piazza strewn with broken columns and capitals, and surrounded by a square of shabby, commonplace houses.

Let us pause for a moment before proceeding onwards under the portico of one of those Siamese-twin churches flanking its extremity, and recall a few of the recollections that spontaneously arise.

All the world knows that the sculptured marble column—in which I can see no beauty—rising before us, once served as a pedestal to the statue of Trajan, whose life was passed in continually running over the world in search of fresh enemies and renewed battles. He who must be execrated as one of the persecutors of the Christians is now dethroned from his lofty stand, and replaced by a statue of St. Peter, erected in rather questionable taste by Sixtus V. The Forum beneath was designed by Domitian, and executed by Trajan, under the superintendence of that same architect, Apollodorus, who afterwards lost his life for daring to utter an unfavourable criticism on the temple of Venus and Rome, designed by the Emperor Adrian. Beside it once stood the Ulpian Basilica. Here Constantine the Great, seated in the tribune of that superb edifice, surrounded by dignitaries, senators, and princes, a goodly company, where the West greeted the East—many of them, however, being pagans, who listened with horror and rage—in the presence of the assembled multitude, whose loud and frequent applause, echoing down the triple aisles and into every columned recess, shewed that Christianity had at last found many believers—here, I say, Constantine proclaimed “Christianity the religion of the world, and ex-

horted all to abjure the errors of a superstition the offspring of ignorance, folly, and vice."

These words, that still sound, after the lapse of fifteen centuries, grand, solemn, and impressive, were received by a populace mad with joy, who for two hours echoed a chorus of "malediction on those who denied the Christians," repeating "that the God of the Christians was the only God, that his enemies were the enemies of Augustus, and that the temples should now be shut, never more to be reopened; and calling on the emperor to banish from Rome that very day and hour every priest of the false gods." But Constantine (whom God seemed to have inspired with the very spirit of wisdom) replied, "That there was this distinction between the service of God and that of idols—that the one was voluntary, and the other forced, God being honoured by the sincere affection and belief of the intelligent creature he had created in his image. Therefore," continued he, "let those who refuse to become Christians fear nothing; for, however much we desire that they should follow our pious example, it is alone by persuasions, and not by force, we would induce them." Having thus spoken, the emperor descended from his throne, and, passing out of the great portico by the equestrian statue of Trajan, proceeded to his

palace at the Lateran in the midst of the applause of his subjects, after which all the city was brilliantly illuminated. A spot so consecrated in the history of Christianity, in itself the most architecturally beautiful monument in Rome, was spared even by the ruthless barbarians, but towards the ninth and tenth centuries the city was given up to internal disorders and excesses of all kinds, and to that period may be referred the ruin of this, as well as many of its other most ancient sites.

From the Forum of Trajan I hastened to the church of San Giuseppe-of-the-Carpenters near by, beneath which lie the Mamertine prisons. The exterior (fronting the Roman Forum, only divided from that of Trajan by a small block of houses) is prettily painted in bright frescoes: a double staircase conducts to the portico, somewhat raised from the ground.

I passed into the interior of the small church—its walls almost covered with *ex voto* offerings—and after some difficulty succeeded in unearthing the custode, whose presence was indispensable, as I intended descending to the Mamertine prisons below. The custode, good man, was well used to his trade, and soon produced the torch which was to lighten our darkness in our descent under the

arch of Septimus Severus into the very bowels of classical Rome. An iron wicket guards the entrance into the vaults, from which we descended to the first dungeon, of rather large proportions when compared with the dismal *piombi* of Venice. But the rigour and sternness of the Republican Romans are visible even in the architecture, the walls being formed of great blocks of solid tufa joined without cement, like the cyclopean walls of the Etruscan cities that crown the Latin hills.

On one side of the ceiling were the remains of what once was a trap-door, now walled up, through which the bodies of prisoners condemned to the lingering tortures of starvation were drawn up after death. This upper prison is now converted into a chapel, and has an altar bearing hideous effigies of St. Peter and St. Paul. Nothing could have been visible but for the torch carried by our custode, a garrulous old man, who had no scruple in making the solemn walls echo to his gossiping, interlarded with many a "*Si, signora*"—" *Mi favorisce di qui*"—" *Vuole vedere di la,*" &c. Down some steep and narrow stairs we descended to the lower prison—small, confined—the great masses of unhewn stone just over our heads. This is the Tullian dungeon, authentically traced as existing as far back as the reign

of Ancus Martius, having been completed by Servius Tullius, whence its name. In this suffocating hole, where the infernal gods reign supreme, and a heavy and unwholesome air only penetrates through a small round hole opening into the upper prison, died by starvation that gallant son of the Desert, the brave Jugurtha, who nobly defended his country against the Roman arms. Here his ardent spirit burst its earthly bonds in solitude and darkness, while, regardless of his unmerited fate, the Roman senators and proud patricians, swelling in the pride of power, gathered their ample togas around them as they swept through the stately colonnades of the neighbouring Forum. Here, too, by order of Cicero, or rather of his wife, the haughty Terentia, the wretched Romans concerned in Catiline's conspiracy were strangled.

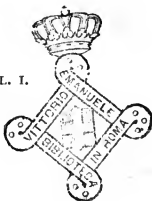
In these prisons died also the vile Sejanus, that cruel and degraded panderer to the base passions of the brutal Tiberius.

Historical tradition confidently names this as the locality where St. Peter was imprisoned, and as such it will be venerated by every denomination of Christians until the day when the earth shall exist no more. I cannot give expression to the contending feelings that agitated me as I

glanced round on the very walls where his eyes had rested, and placed my hand on the very pillar to which he was chained, when I pictured his sufferings, his heavenly consolations, and horrible death. Such emotions are overwhelming, and can only be realised in full force on the very localities where, as with Thomas the Apostle, one's finger touches the sacred marks, and the doubting soul is, as it were, forced into belief. Here is the spring said to have gushed miraculously forth out of the solid stones (and solid indeed they are, and of Etruscan massiveness) in order to enable the Apostles Peter and Paul to baptize, during their imprisonment, the keepers of the prison, Processus and Martinian, who were so powerfully affected by the teaching and example of the Apostles, that, on the return of Nero from his Grecian expedition, they suffered martyrdom in the persecution that then commenced. The water wells up bright and pure, never rising or falling, and is now enclosed in a kind of setting of masonry, and covered by a bronze lid. After the emotions and recollections excited by these prisons I could see no more; the day, too, was already falling, and the light, when we re-ascended, had become pale and dim. I had, during the last few hours, felt, admired, and examined

so much, my mind was oppressed by the weight of recollections. On returning home I caught up a pen in *furore*, determined to convey on paper, however faintly, some idea of the variety offered by one day's sight-seeing at Rome.

END OF VOL. I.



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